

# St Francis Pet Care

# 2013

Annual Report of St. Francis Pet Care, Inc.  
January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013

Annual  
Report



## **Mission**

The charitable mission of St. Francis Pet Care (SFPC) is to provide primary non-emergency veterinary care to the pets of homeless persons, veterans referred from the VA, and very low income residents of Alachua County, Florida. We provide exams, treatment, vaccines and medicines, consultations, education in responsible pet ownership, spay/neuter services, monthly flea and heartworm preventives, pet food and pet supplies. 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.

## **Our Services**

St. Francis House Pet Care provides primary non-emergency veterinary care and services to responsible but homeless or very low income pet owners at our weekly Clinic. We only see pets belonging to clients who meet our eligibility criteria and have attended a screening and orientation session.

Veterinary care at the Clinic is provided by veterinary students and faculty of 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 services provided include exams, vaccinations, and treatment for common problems. Non-veterinary services are also performed, including nail clipping and microchip implantation.

Patients are provided with medications for common ailments such as ear infections, skin conditions, and pain. Their owners are encouraged to come in monthly to pick up pet food and doses of flea and heartworm preventives. Pet supplies (leashes, collars, harnesses, shampoo, pet beds, toys and treats) are offered when available.

A major objective of SFPC 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. SFPC arranges for intact animals to be sterilized and in some cases pays surgical expenses and provides transportation.

## **Progressive solidarity**

A few months ago, an Alachua county commissioner made a speech at a benefit event for a local advocacy group, not a terribly unusual happening. But in his talk he barely mentioned the cause that was being celebrated. Rather, he admonished the audience not to focus narrowly on their own immediate interest, but to understand that they must support an entire ecosystem of progressive causes to create sustainable change. Note "progressive" in this context does not mean liberal or conservative or libertarian, but rather "in the support of progress," which all

political camps can agree on. In other words, if you want something good to happen, support other good things happening – show progressive solidarity.

It is easy for non-profit charitable organizations to see themselves in competition with each other for donations, volunteers and recognition. We all operate in the same space. SFPC was one of 94 charitable agencies approved as beneficiaries of the 2013 Campaign for Charities, the University of Florida's annual employee giving campaign. On April 5, 2014, the date of our second annual Paws & Pals on the Run, there will be two other 5K run/walks in Gainesville for the benefit of other causes.

However, if in one sense we compete with these other organizations, we also share their goals and have an interest in their success.

Several charities and agencies provide health care and mental health care to underserved populations. SFPC is also concerned for the physical and mental health of our clients. We know that people do better with pets; the psychological and medical advantages of the human-animal bond are well documented in 25 years of research. Pet ownership has been shown to lower blood pressure and reduce anxiety, to improve the immune systems of children, and to reduce depression. Pets encourage exercise and provide companionship, both of which help improve mental and physical well-being. Enabling an elderly woman or homeless man or down-on-luck family to keep their dog or cat measurably improves their ability to handle day-to-day stressors. Moreover, people who are disinclined to seek help for themselves can be motivated to do so if that enables them to take better care of the pets they love and feel responsible for. So St. Francis Pet Care also cares about human health care; we try to refer our clients to other agencies that can help them, and we appreciate the referrals we receive from other agencies.



Alachua County has an unusually active animal rescue community. Nearly a dozen rescue groups work with county animal shelters to find homes for adoptable animals and to help rehabilitate dogs and cats with treatable problems. SFPC's veterinarians and volunteers love animals and want them all to have good homes. We know from surrender interviews at shelters that a common reason people give up their pets is because they can't afford to pay for a medical condition or to provide necessities like food, flea treatment and heartworm prevention. Part of the mission of St Francis Pet Care is to keep people and pets together for the benefit of both. By providing services that help people keep their pets, SFPC helps decrease turn-ins to the shelter, contributes to a reduction in euthanasia, and helps relieve the burden on local rescue groups. Conversely, pets in our program occasionally do need new homes because their owner has died or become incapacitated, and we rely on the local rescues to help find foster homes for these animals to and ultimately to place them in good homes.

A key to reducing euthanasia is increasing the proportion of spayed and neutered dogs and cats in the community. In addition to local veterinary practices which do all they can to encourage

sterilization, some area charities provide free or very low cost spay and neuter for those who qualify. SFPC insists that all animals in a household be spayed or neutered as a condition of acceptance into our program, which is a motivator for many otherwise reluctant pet owners. We work closely with providers of spay/neuter surgery to screen for eligibility, schedule appointments, and handle logistics. Sometimes our clients have been able to take advantage of grants obtained by these providers, sometimes SFPC pays the providers out of our budget, and sometimes we have gotten grants jointly with spay/neuter providers. We have to work together.

Many university initiatives, government agencies, churches and local charities work to provide a variety of services to specific target populations including the homeless and hungry, veterans, minority groups and people of color. These groups variously provide food, toiletries and other supplies; emergency and longer-term shelter; substance abuse counseling; legal advice; HIV/AIDS testing and other services. A high proportion of our SFPC clients come from these target populations and many depend on services provided by these other agencies. Sometimes these groups receive donations of pet supplies that they forward to us, and sometimes we receive donations we can't use and forward to them.

We could go on with examples from education, child welfare, and public health, but the point should already be clear. No single agency can accomplish its mission alone. Providers of health and mental health care should appreciate the health benefits of the pet ownership we support. Animal welfare groups should appreciate SFPC's contribution to reducing the number of pets turned in to shelters and increasing the rate of spay/neuter in the community. Service providers that target specific populations should understand that we have many clients in common and that our clients need many services.

In turn, the volunteers of St Francis Pet Care appreciate the flourishing ecosystem of university, governmental, and non-profit organizations in Alachua County and the greater Gainesville area. The community is lucky to have so many agencies providing goods and services complementing our own. We need them, we appreciate them, and we want them to succeed in their missions. We also believe that if we work together there is room for all of us to thrive. And we're happy to share our 5K race date with two other races – it's a small price to pay.

## **2013 in Review**

### **Pet Food Ltd.**

Our agreement with Pet Food Ltd, a distributor of high-end pet food in Tampa, remained in place for most of 2013. Volunteers made trips to Tampa at least once a month to pick up food, mostly broken bag returns, near expiry, and unused samples. Towards the end of the year the company was sold and the new management discontinued the arrangement. Even so, we received 14,953 pounds of premium pet food such as Nutro, Innova and Blue Buffalo, for which we are very grateful. Our thanks to Lawrence Shrader and the other Pet Food Ltd. employees who made it possible. Thanks also to Larry Stoppelli of SnG Pavement Marking for providing storage facilities for the pet food, without which we couldn't have used it.

## Paws & Pals on the Run



The first annual Paws & Pals on the Run was held on April 20 at Jonesville Park and despite cold and rainy weather it was a great success. A committee of volunteers led by Joy Parker worked tirelessly throughout the first quarter of 2013 to conceptualize the event, find a venue, solicit sponsors, design fliers and posters and T-shirts, do advertising and promotion, handle registration, and find enough volunteers to staff the day. Ultimately the event raised \$6855 after expenses. The dog-friendly 5K Fun Run/Walk will be our signature fund-raiser from now on.

## Banfield Charitable Trust

In early January we learned that SFPC had been awarded a grant of \$8000 from the Banfield Charitable Trust for the purchase of medicines, veterinary supplies and pet food. During the course of the year some of the money was used for vaccines, otic and ophthalmic solutions, medicated shampoo and medicines, but the bulk of it went to purchase flea and heartworm preventives for dogs and cats. Donations of these from the large pharmaceutical companies have decreased dramatically, and veterinarians do not receive much of a discount on purchase. On the other hand, less than expected was spent on pet food because of our arrangement with Pet Food LDT in Tampa.



Interviewed at the end of the year, Clinic veterinarians said that simply knowing the grant funds were available made them feel more confident in the standard of care they could deliver at Clinic. One of our veterinarians wrote the following:

It's a humbling experience to be a Clinic volunteer because it soon becomes clear that we have been dealt the good cards in the "Great Game of Life." It's wonderful to be able to assist the less fortunate by helping the creatures most dear to their hearts. Unfortunately, veterinary medicines and health care products are not inexpensive, and the Clinic usually operates on a shoe-string budget. It's terrific that additional funds have been made available to supplement the more modest individual donations that have sustained the Clinic since its inception. As a volunteer Clinic veterinarian, I'm personally very grateful that the Banfield Charitable Trust deemed the Clinic worthy of this substantial donation because it will help fulfill a little-recognized, but important need in our community: health care for the pets which add a better quality of life to our less fortunate members.

## The search for a new home

The Clinic's location at 501 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> St is convenient for our clients, but the rental building itself is less than ideal – it is too small, ineffectively cooled and heated, and difficult to keep clean. We continued to look for a new location throughout the year. We spent some time pursuing an invitation from HealthStreet to consider sharing their space. HealthStreet, an initiative associated with the UF Department of Epidemiology, provides a suite of free services including health screenings, use of Internet computers, classes, clothes and toiletries at their location on Archer Road. Unfortunately, that possibility did not work out and we were still looking for something suitable at the end of the year. A sizeable unexpected donation opened the possibility that SFPC might someday purchase a building of our own or find some appropriately zoned land on which to install a prefabricated modular unit.

## Clinic and Screenings

Clinic was held every Tuesday of the year except the day before Christmas and New Years' Eve. Through purchase and donations we had enough pharmaceuticals and pet food to serve all of our clients. However, screening/orientation for prospective new clients was suspended from mid-September to mid-October because the veterinarians and front desk staff were struggling to accommodate the increased number of animals coming for vet visits.



At the end of 2013 SFPC had 492 active files (patients), roughly the same number as last year. We took on 144 new clients, and ejected 3 clients for failing to abide by the rules of the program. The number of client and patient visits increased substantially over 2012. Clinic veterinarians saw 366 more pet visits than in 2012, and visits to pick up food and medications roughly doubled. Patients were 80% dogs, 20% cats.

The discussion around expanding Clinic hours continued through most of the year. The idea of holding an extra clinic once a month during evening or weekend hours is particularly attractive, since some practicing veterinarians might consider volunteering at a time that does not conflict with their work hours. Opening a second day each week just to distribute pet food, flea/tick preventives and heartworm preventives with a single veterinarian supervising is also possible. The possibility of screening less often, bi-monthly or even quarterly, was also considered. Although things remained *status quo* for the year, changes are possible in 2014.

**Active and inactive files, 2013 compared to 2012**

	2013	2012	Difference
Active files	492	490	+2
Inactive files	1486	1176	+310
Total	1978	1666	+312
New patients	144	135	+9

**Green folder clients by category, 2013 compared to 2012.**

	2013	2012	Difference
Section 8 housing	3	0	+3
CHOICES	1	1	0
Dr. referral	21	21	0
HUD/VASH	3	0	+3
IFH	8	10	-2
Disability	67	23	+44
VA referral	22	17	+5
Verified homeless	46	25	+21
Total	171	97	+74

**Vet visits and food/meds pickup only, 2013 compared to 2012.\***

	2013	2012	Difference
Client vet visits	806	537	+269
Dog vet visits	810	unknown	
Cat vet visits	200	unknown	
Total pet vet visits	1010	650	+360
Client food/meds only	1283	665	+618
Dog food/meds	1462	unknown	
Cat food/meds	448	unknown	
Total pet food/meds	1910	930	+973

\*SFPC started counting dog and cat visits separately in mid-2012.

**Spay/neuter**

For much of the year, No More Homeless Pets had a grant that allowed them to spay and neuter pets of low income residents of several counties, including Alachua, at no charge to the owner. As a result, we referred clients and potential clients to NMHP when possible. We did not keep statistics on referrals, however, because the follow-up reporting to verify how many actually made and kept appointments would have been burdensome for both NMHP and SFPC.

We did keep statistics on spays and neuters that were performed by UF Shelter Medicine. In most cases SFPC paid Shelter Medicine for the sterilizations, and in all cases SFPC volunteers transported the animals to and from surgery. Shelter Medicine performed 7 cat sterilizations and 23 dog sterilizations.



Although this seems like a low figure, the logistics of spay/neuter are consuming, and there were several discussions of how to improve our procedures throughout the year. One issue concerned our puppy policy. SFPC does not take puppies (dogs under a year old) as patients in order to discourage puppy mills and the taking of “free” puppies. However, SFPC will arrange to spay/neuter puppies whose owners would otherwise qualify for our program. The question is whether we should also provide pediatric vaccinations and microchips, and if so, how to handle the logistics of vaccinations, given that young puppies need four DAPP boosters at intervals and can’t have rabies vaccinations until they reach a proper weight, usually around 16 weeks. We now have a policy that coordinates SFPC care and the spay/neuter provider care to ensure that puppies have their full set of vaccinations. They will only be microchipped, however, when formally allowed into our program at one year of age.

	Male	Female	Total
Cats	3	4	7
Dogs	12	11	23
Total	15	15	30

Spay/neuter performed by UF College of Veterinary Medicine, Shelter Medicine

## Grants

SFPC received a 2013/14 Gainesville Community Grant which reimburses \$20 for each client visit to a Clinic veterinarian up to a total of \$2458. The Gainesville Community Grant program is open to non-profit community organizations providing eligible services to needy individuals and families. In 2013 the program instated a new policy to reimburse only services to residents of the city of Gainesville proper. Client addresses had to be verified against a map showing the Gainesville city limits and copied to the reimbursement form.

As noted above, SFPC’s 2012 grant award of \$8000 from the Banfield Charitable Trust (BCT) was spent in 2013 on pet food, medicines, ophthalmic and otic solutions, medicated shampoo, and flea/heartworm preventives. Simply knowing that the funds were available in a reserved line item was a relief to the veterinarians, one of whom wrote: “I would say without a doubt having the grant to provide funds for essentials ... makes us more confident in providing quality care.”

SFPC was awarded an Animal Welfare Grant in the amount of \$17,100 from the Wagmore Foundation to pay No More Homeless Pets for spay/neuter. The money can be used for the pets of clients and prospective clients who would otherwise qualify for our program but have intact animals in their household. We are particularly delighted to have these resources, because the people that we refer for spay/neuter are often the most reluctant or unlikely to spay or neuter their animals on their own.

## SFPC through the year

The SFPC “Regulars,” a group of 20 or so volunteers, continued to meet monthly to plan events, fundraising, outreach and other activities. Most of the Regulars also volunteer at Clinic, help



with record-keeping, organize special events, and/or do other necessary “back room” jobs that keep St Francis Pet Care running.

In January, SFPC did our first ever inventory. Volunteers came out to Clinic over several days and tallied everything in the building that wasn’t attached, right down to the number of tablets in a pill bottle. Later the information was transferred to a spreadsheet and the unit cost and total cost of each item tallied. An accurate inventory is important for financial reporting and also for guiding purchase decisions.

Also in January, we were the beneficiary of a pet food drive held by Temple Shir Shalom. Chris Machen spoke to a Sunday School class about why homeless people deserve to have pets and why they should care for them. It was a good experience and we hoped that talking to children when they are young might make a difference in their attitudes when they grow up. If SFPC had more volunteers or more hours in the day, we’d try to do more outreach.

On February 23 we were beneficiaries of The Continuum 5K-9, a run organized by Pledge-5. We were able to table at the event and to contribute two baskets to the silent auction, and best of all we received a portion of the pet food and pet supplies donated by participants in the event.

Also in February, Deborah Harris, our resident artist and PhotoShop wizard, designed a new logo for St Francis Pet Care and made graphics of several versions for use on letterhead, return address labels and social media.



In March preparations for the first Paws & Pals went from high gear into crazy high gear. Clinic vets and front desk staff began to realize that the volume of vet visits and meds visits every week was consistently greater than last year, and Dr. Kaplan-Stein reported spending two thousand dollars on flea/heartworm preventives because donations from the pharmaceutical manufacturers were down.

In April we made the first use of a new “special case fund” to remove a growth on a very sweet pitbull dog. The special case fund is really just a line item in our budget reserved to reimburse outside veterinarians for treatments outside of the scope of our Clinic. SFPC does not perform emergency care or any major medical procedures requiring anesthesia and it can be heartbreaking when pets under our care need more than we can provide. Several dogs and cats were successfully treated with special case funds during the course of the year.

May was our best and worst month. On the one hand, Kayla Stewart, one of our most fabulous regular volunteers, left us to join the Peace Corps in China. We sent her off with tears, a party, and enormous pride in the great work she’ll be doing. On the other hand, Paws & Pals on the Run came off without a hitch despite horrible weather.

In June the Board of Directors voted to increase the amount of money allocated to “special cases”. Brit Coles, a long-time volunteer who had returned to her native Sweden to go to vet school, came to visit for a month and worked at Clinic every Tuesday while she was here.

In July, after much painful discussion, we made the decision to suspend screenings for new clients temporarily. Clinic staff were simply overwhelmed by the number of visits and could not absorb the number of new clients coming for their first visit each month. Also, because of some disputes over who actually owned a particular animal, we updated our forms in July to include a secondary owner.

On August 26 we held our last annual yard sale. Although we made \$870 on the sale, the work required to collect saleable items, find a place to store them, move everything to the sale site, and dispose of unsold goods later is just too overwhelming to continue every year.

In September Ryon Maree, a regular Clinic volunteer, attended the WOW! Pre-health kickoff at UF and got names of several students interested in volunteering with SFPC. In addition to handling distribution of flea/heartworm meds, Ryon took on the role of clinic volunteer coordinator.

The kickoff for the 2013 UF Campaign for Charities was September 27 and Dale Kaplan-Stein and Joy Parker attended. The UFCC is our largest single source of operating funds, so getting a good start to the campaign is crucial to our existence. Also in September, the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Francis Pet Care rolled around without fanfare. Our first client in September 2007 was a woman with an Aussie mix named Baby Girl.

In October we had a table at the Gainesville Pride Festival for the first time. It was a great event with good attendance and we'll try to do it every year from now on.

SFPC attended Breakfast on the Plaza, an annual event to bring together homeless people and service providers, on November 14. The City of Gainesville expects that to be the last Breakfast on the Plaza event, because in 2014 the new Empowerment Center should be open on the site of the old Gainesville Correctional Institution.

Volunteers staffed a table at the Gainesville Downtown Festival & Art November 16-17. We are very grateful to Solar Impact, a renewable energy company in Gainesville, for sharing their table with us after we failed to meet the application date for a table of our own.

Volunteers gathered at Dr. Kaplan-Stein's house on December 1 and stuffed many dozens of tube socks and goodie bags full of small necessities like chocolate, toiletries, playing cards, batteries, candles, eye glasses and gloves to bring to the Home Van holiday party for the homeless.

SFPC held our own Clinic holiday party for clients and their pets on December 17. Crow, a long-time client-volunteer, fashioned a Christmas tree out of blown-up surgical gloves which added to the festivities. The Shands Human Resources Department, one of SFPC's most consistent supporters, held a holiday pet food drive for SFPC and personally delivered it the day of the party. It was a fabulous way to end the year!

## Balance Sheet

Our unaudited 2013 balance sheet as of December 31, 2013

### ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Alarion checking	29,585.54
PayPal account	61.08
Petty cash	165.00
SF House account	-10.00
UF Foundation	731.21
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Total Checking/Savings	30,532.83
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Total Current Assets	30,532.83
Fixed Assets	
Furniture and equipment	607.99
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>31,140.82</b>
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### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
Current liabilities	
Credit cards	711.49
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Total Current liabilities	711.49
Total liabilities	711.49
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	28,086.54
Net Income	2,342.79
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Total Equity	30,429.33
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<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>31,140.82</b>
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