

ETSN transports 600th pet to spay/neuter clinic

By Ashley Rader

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East Tennessee Spay and Neuter passed an important milestone Thursday morning when the group transported its 600th pet back from the Margaret B. Mitchell clinic for spay and neutering surgery.

ETSN Founder Danika Nadzan started offering transports to the clinic in Bristol in June 2009. Since then, she has transported 613 pets for their sterilization surgeries with pet number 600 returning to her owner Thursday morning.

The 600th pet was a female tabby cat named Ginger, who belongs to Brosia Sears. Ginger also made the trip to the clinic with GG, a black female cat belonging to Miranda Sears, Brosia's mother.

Brenda Sears, who picked up the cats, said her daughter Miranda saw the ETSN bus parked at Sloan's Automotive and called to have the cats spayed. To mark the occasion of the 600th pet transport, Sears was given a gift basket filled with pet themed items.

ETSN provides the transport to the Margaret Mitchell clinic once a week. The clinic offers low cost spays and neuters. Nadzan noted that when going to the clinic, the most a pet owner would pay would be \$97 for the surgeries and any shots they also elected to receive. The costs for the transport are \$60 for all dogs, \$55 for female cats, \$40 for male cats, \$10 each for shots and \$15 for transportation.

From the start of 2011, Nadzan has transported 239 pets. She stated her new transport bus was a big help in getting the number of pets sterilized as has been done. Before running the bus, Nadzan transported pets in a van and was limited to 10-12 pets at a time. Now on the bus, she can take between 18-25 pets on each trip.

In 2010, she transported 320 pets to the clinic, with 94 percent from Carter County. During the mobile clinic that was held last year, 54 pets received surgeries. In total, 374 pets were helped in 2010. Of these 101 were female cats, 125 were female dogs, 68 were male cats and 80 were male dogs.

The average cost paid by pet owners was \$42.68 and 72 percent of owners received some sort of aid from voucher assistance. Close to 80 percent of these vouchers come from the Carter County Humane Society while others come from different rescue organizations.

Nadzan said working to get pets spayed and neutered has really become a community effort. She has a number of volunteers who work with her, driving the bus, organizing sign ups, cleaning the bus after transport and helping to care for pets on the ride back and forth.

She has a number of sponsors whose logos and advertisements can be found on the side of the transport bus. Mike Barnett from Big John's Closeouts donated shelving materials for the inside of the bus and the automotive parts to get the bus operational again. Sloan's Automotive donated the labor to work on the bus. Nadzan's neighbors assembled the shelves, upholstered benches on the bus and made curtains for the windows.

Even with the current community support, Nadzan and ETSN are always looking for more volunteers. She estimated if she had three teams of three volunteers she could run the bus three days a week instead of once and would increase the number of animals helped to almost 300 each month.

She also plans to have her old van made over to look like the transport bus and adding pickup locations in Hampton and Roan Mountain. She said these neighborhoods have a high rate of abandoned animals that run stray or take up with families. By offering a pickup service in these areas the number of unwanted puppies and kittens is likely to drop.

For individuals wanting to help out with ETSN, volunteers are always appreciated. The organization is also collecting ink jet printer cartridges, cell phones and aluminum cans to recycle for additional funding. They also accept donations for supplies. Nadzan specifically mentioned travel carriers for cats and dogs.

Nadzan said her long-term dream would be for Carter County to have a pet center that would include a low cost or sliding scale pet clinic, groomer and adoption center.

For more information, call ETSN at 289-5548 or visit www.etnsPAY-neuter.org.



Photo by Brandon Hicks Danika Nadzan, center, presented Brenda Sears, left, with a gift basket on having the 600th pet spayed through East Tennessee Spay and Neuter's transport service. Nadzan holds Ginger the cat who was the 600th pet. Also pictured is Frank Klein, volunteer bus driver for ETSN.