

October 15, 2012

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

## **Two Animal Population Milestones Reached This Month**

A pair of milestones will be celebrated this month by two agencies that have been longtime partners on animal issues in Springfield.

Earlier this month, SAAFhouse completed its 10,000th spay/neuter surgery since opening its doors in August 2010. And the health department's Animal Control program is on pace to mark one full year in which no adoptable, non-pit bull dog has been euthanized.

The two agencies will host a celebration event from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 21 at the SAAFhouse, 1600 N. Washington Ave. There will be refreshments, goodie bags for the kids, and tours of the clinic. The public and media are invited to attend.

After years of taking in and euthanizing large numbers of animals, the Animal Control program has reduced euthanasia rates for dogs to just 12 percent in the past 11 months. The rate was in the 50 percent range just a few years ago. This has been accomplished with the help of a number of no-kill adoption and rescue partners including C.A.R.E., Half-Way Home, Kristy Ritter and Leigh's Lost & Found.

SAAF is another major partner. The 10,000 surgeries and counting have prevented the births of an estimated 60,000 unwanted puppies and kittens in the last two years.

Both agencies partially credit the other for their success. Janet Martin, SAAF President, said: "The commitment that Animal Control has made to protecting animals as well as people is critical. Animal Control understands the importance of spaying and neutering and is a strong supporter of SAAFhouse. We are so thankful to have them as a partner in the fight against pet overpopulation."

Karen Prescott, Environmental Health Administrator for the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, said: "SAAF's model for low-cost surgeries for as many animals as possible is a huge factor in moving this community forward on animal issues. They are tackling the root of the issue. Fewer animals born means there are fewer animals that must be adopted – or euthanized."

Animal Control uses SAAFhouse to conduct spay/neuter surgeries for animals brought to the shelter that are deemed adoptable. Before they are given to rescue agencies, the animals are "fixed" and also receive vaccinations for five common diseases plus other care. The Springfield City Council has allocated funding for the spay/neuter surgeries in each of the city's last two budget years – an amount totalling about \$80,000.

The mission of Animal Control is to reunite dogs and cats with their owners, facilitate adoptions by approved rescue partners and protect residents from animals running at large. SAAF's mission is to lead a collaborative effort in Greene County to improve animal welfare, promote responsible pet ownership, and reduce pet overpopulation.

Media contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, Springfield-Greene County Health Department – (417) 874-1205; and Janet Martin – [saaf2018@yahoo.com](mailto:saaf2018@yahoo.com).

For more information on Animal Control, visit <http://health.springfieldmo.gov/animals>.  
For more information on SAAF, visit [www.saaf2018.org](http://www.saaf2018.org).