

Mobile spay-neuter unit to be unveiled

CAROLYN BOLTON, NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

February 7, 2012 5:33 AM

Members of CARE4Paws will unveil a mobile spay-neuter clinic this weekend during the nonprofit's "Furever Valentines" fundraiser at Oreana Winery.

The converted van, purchased from a local veterinarian, will be utilized throughout Santa Barbara County to give low-income pet owners the opportunity to have their pets spayed or neutered. Areas in which the mobile unit will be deployed, including Santa Maria, Lompoc and neighborhoods on Santa Barbara's Eastside and Westside, are places that have been identified as having a high population of animals that eventually end up in shelters, said Isabelle Gullo, director of CARE4Paws, during a Monday interview with the News-Press.

"Having a clinic on wheels that we can take into low-income neighborhoods where we see a lot of unaltered animals is really going to help us lower the number of unwanted litters born and, consequently, reduce the number of animals that end up in shelters," she said.

"Many people are enthusiastic about the results this (program) could bring."

Members of CARE4Paws will also host spay days three or four times a month, Ms. Gullo said, adding the majority of the spay-neuter days will take place on the Eastside.

The money used to purchase the mobile unit, outfitted in large part because of a \$25,000 grant from the Santa Barbara Humane Society, "all came from generous individual donors," Ms. Gullo said.

And, while funding from the Santa Barbara Humane Society will help outfit the unit, the annual cost of operating and staffing the vehicle is estimated at \$80,000—an amount that will need to be met every year the mobile clinic deploys.

Consequently, proceeds from "Furever Valentines" will go toward the costs incurred from operating the mobile spay-neuter unit, Ms. Gullo said. The event is 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday. Oreana Winery is located at 205 Anacapa St. Tickets are \$35, and include food, wine, chocolate, live music and a silent auction. Participants will also be given the opportunity to tour the unit.

CARE4Paws, with support from the Humane Society and local veterinarians, last year "fixed" more than 700 dogs and cats in the county.

It's the organization's goal to increase that number by 300 after deploying the mobile clinic, Ms. Gullo said.

For tickets and more info on the organization or its upcoming fundraiser, go to www.care4paws.org or call 968-2273.



CARMEN SMYTH/NEWS-PRESS
The nonprofit group CARE4Paws is rolling out a new mobile spay-neuter unit that will target low-income areas battling with high numbers of cats and dogs.



At a shop in Oxnard, Jose Espinosa gets a high gloss out of the paint on CARE4Paws' new mobile spay-neuter unit.



The converted 1997 Ford E-350 van will allow CARE4Paws to serve communities with high numbers of dogs and cats across Santa Barbara County.