



Caring about critters

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TILLAMOOK COUNTY — If you haven't heard of the nonprofit charity United Paws (UP), it's because it is not a place. It's an effort by no more than 10 concerned citizens of this county. Their goal is simple – to end the suffering of animals through spaying and neutering.

Patti Bumgarner, the newly elected president of UP's Board and a former longtime volunteer at a no-kill shelter in Sherwood, said, "Shelters are extremely important and so are fostering programs. However, shelters eventually fill up, and there's a limit to how many cats or dogs people can take into their homes. Therefore, the vast majority of people who work for the welfare of animals come to the conclusion that the key to preventing all misery connected with animal homelessness is to spay and neuter."

To this end, UP has worked to raise money to work with local veterinarians to spay and neuter the companion cats and dogs of low-income families, as well as feral cat populations who are being fed by caregivers, regardless of income. In the last two years, UP has paid vets and mobile clinics for 572 spay/neuters. "This is a huge contribution, for the animals, the people who care for them and the community," said Bumgarner.

While UP is a small organization, its volunteers work with people throughout the county. For example, with the help of Bay City residents, UP sponsored and paid for the spaying/neutering of up to 30 cats in two neighborhoods. Also, with the help of local residents, it has spayed/neutered feral colonies in Nehalem, Idaville, several Tillamook neighborhoods and Cloverdale. In addition to spay/neuter efforts, UP may pay for shots for companion cats and dogs and feral cats, as well as provide food for those feeding cat colonies. The organization does not sponsor a foster program but it does assist approved, independent fostering efforts through advertising for permanent homes and paying for spay/neuter services.

A nonprofit 501 (c) (3) animal protection and education organization, United Paws began in Lincoln County in 2000 and initiated spay/neuter efforts here beginning in 2002. With a spay/neuter discount clinic, humane society and shelter available to Lincoln County residents, UP founders passed the baton to Tillamook County volunteers. Since then, UP has made strides. An income of \$5,531 in 2004 grew to \$13,063 in 2005 and \$12,700 of last year's income went directly to local county vets for spay/neuter and health care expenses. The remainder of the money went to reimburse volunteers for out-of-pocket vet costs. All food is donated by volunteers. So is money spent on all office supplies, postage and printing used for funding. In other words, 100 percent of tax-deductible donations will go to help the animals.

Under the direction of board members Patti Bumgarner, president; Cate Mayer, treasurer, and Diane Johnson, secretary, UP has high hopes for the future. With Mayer and Johnson, who are also both board members of the Tillamook Animal Shelter Board (TAS), UP hopes to become a partner in the plans for a new shelter. UP has further expanded its fund-raising efforts from mailings to an application under consideration by PetCo.



Your donation is tax-deductible and 100% goes to help the animals. All administrative costs are absorbed by volunteers.

Patti Bumgarner inspects traps with rescued family dog, Flip.
COURTESY PHOTO

2006 Garibaldi Trapping Adventure Success
"Of the five cats I trapped, three went to good homes and only one was released to the "wild." The fifth one is a much-loved resident of the local coffee house and deli. She lives outside under the deck and is cared for by the devoted shop owner. It seems everyone in this little town is behind what I am doing: the construction and maintenance crew at the old mill and even the guys who work at the saw mill. There is a beautiful chocolate brown cat behind the grocery store that I will trap next. I am certain that cat will find a home."

.....Garry, Garibaldi

of abandoned animals in Tillamook County, ca (UP) at P.O. Box 159, Tillamook, OR 97141.

garner. "With no county resources available d, United Paws fights an ongoing and often sion, burnout and miscommunication occur now serves to remind the county of the critical need, and work together."