



Embedded Community Outreach in Baltimore City

Project #
FY18-332

County: Baltimore City

Number of Cats Spayed:	162	Number of Dogs Spayed:	62
Number of Cats Neutered:	161	Number of Dogs Neutered:	72

Amount Received: \$29,310 Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0

Project Synopsis:

CCC increased the number of spay/neuter surgeries over this grant period 12% from FY17 for a total of 457 spay/neuter surgeries. We continue to grow organically and along the way develop productive, long-lasting relationships with pet families. For FY18 grant period, over 50% of surgeries came from recommendations and repeat clients. We were again able to exceed our projected number of surgeries and rabies vaccines by 25% due to more discounts established through our partnerships with MD SPCA and BARCS.



Project Description:

Charm City Companions uses embedded community outreach to connect with pet owners directly and through influencers within the neighborhoods. We provide information and facilitate free spay/neuter with rabies vaccines for those pets in need (94% of pets met). In addition to the spay/neuter 'packet' we also provide transport and loaner carriers to anyone needing these services (97% CCC transport). Through our partnerships, we were also able to provide free booster shots for Parvo/Distemper vaccines, microchipping with free lifetime registration and food to supplement when clients were going through a tough time. Our work is done primarily in pet resource deserts in East Baltimore zip codes 21202, 21205, 21213, 21224, 21231. We provide a critical service to the communities in which we work since 85% of the pets we meet are unaltered and through our program we are able to alter a strong majority or about 90%.

The spay and neuter surgeries we helped facilitate are 'high value'. Many of the pets, cats in particular, are free roaming and often males and females reside in the same home. A significant number of our clients take pets in, especially during the winter months, because they relate personally to suffering and hunger. Providing spay/neuter is the only reason many of our clients are able to keep a pet. Again, this applies especially to



outdoor, unowned cats. Once we spay/neuter a cat that someone has been feeding, almost always, the cat becomes welcome in the home fulltime.

While a key part of pet wellness is spay/neuter, we consider our organization a community wellness provider. We are starting to seeing more people out walking their pets and able to keep their pets. We are also contributing to significant decline of dogs and cats entering the shelter from our zip codes. We continue to see a direct correlation in the increase of spay/neuters facilitated through Charm City Companions and the decrease in shelter in-take within the areas we work.

CCC's mission is to elevate community health through pet wellness and we were able to do that as a result of this grant. This grant has proven to be a significant element to CCC's launch, solid foundation and organic growth since 2014. We have increased the numbers of surgeries each year. Because of this ongoing award of funds for spay/neuter we now have the attention, support and fiscal backing of MD SPCA and BARCS, locally, and organizations like PetSmart Charities and Maddie's Fund, nationally. These partnerships have opened many doors to wellness and have created opportunities to grow our team, expand our service area and address glaring, complicated issues such as housing for pet families living at or below poverty.

Summary of Approach:

Our approach is simple - go to the pet owners - meet them where they are in every sense. Most important, we employ a genuinely non-judgemental approach which has gained us deep trust with our pet families and the community at large.

While we now receive many referrals and calls from our clients with new pets, our traditional approach to meeting people is door-to-door canvassing any day of the week. We have more recently started to populate our volunteer positions with people from the communities we serve, adding to the community wellness by giving people a positive work experience and creating even more trust within the neighborhoods.

In addition to canvassing and referrals we have also been partnering and attending events hosted by other animal/social welfare and social justice organizations serving people in our Area of Focus. In 2019 we've started focus on a public housing community that is being gentrified in the next 12 months so we've been able to infiltrate to offer all pets spay/neuter and vaccines to increase owner's chance of keeping their pets through the move.

We have also continued to identify and train community ambassadors who are outfitted with Tshirts, spay/neuter vouchers and magnets that contain our contact information so people can spread the word everyday in the community.

To be successful with our appointments we employ a rigid follow-up and reminder process where we call clients with pets scheduled every week up to the night prior. The night prior we call once again as a reminder for the appointment and other instructions such as no food for pet after midnight that night. Once the surgery is complete we call our clients the following day or two to check on their pets. This has been a successful approach to further solidify our relationships.

Accomplishments:

We were able to facilitate 457 surgeries in 14 months, 70% were cats. Half of the cats were female and just over half of dogs were male. Nearly all pets received transport (97%) from the CCC team.

As we transported to the MD SPCA each week, we continued to strengthen our relationship and had meetings throughout the year with the spay/neuter clinic manager and medical director to brainstorm ways to best support each other. We are now providing transports for some MD SPCA clients living in pet wellness resource



deserts in West Baltimore zip codes. We are also have a more fortified relationships with The MD SPCA and BARCS and have plans to continue working more collaboratively moving forward.

We've added to our staff and now have 1.75 paid positions and are working to add two Outreach Coordinators to our team. We have also grown our 'regular' volunteer staff by a third with the addition of four new CCC crew members to support the increased demand for spay/neuter services.

While we continue to grow in all the appropriate directions, we also still struggle securing transport resources. We have primarily one person doing most transports which has become logistically impossible. Increased press and attention has directed a larger pool of qualified and 'serious' volunteers our way. We are now better positioned to increase by 50% to meet demand.

Lessons Learned:

Our primary lesson learned is that we can greatly extend our services and those of our partners through ongoing collaboration. More importantly, we can better serve our mutual clients. Through our collaborative relationships with multiple organizations in Baltimore City, we've learned that we are a far more trusted and effective resource having these connections.

We've also learned that if we ask, our partners are willing to do most things to help us with our mission. This is especially the case once a partner has shadowed our team doing community outreach. This is when it becomes clear to everyone that regardless of socio-economic status, people love their pets.

Attachments:

CCC_FY2018_Spay/NeuterSurgeryClientDetail
Spay/Neuter Map

For More Information Contact:

Name:

Annie Pruitt, Executive Director/Founder

Organization Name and Address:

Charm City Companions
500 Park Avenue, #115

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Email: AnniePruitt@CharmCityCompanions.org

