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TAPS gets grant for needy

By Ed McMenamin
Pekin Daily Times

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PEKIN, Ill. — A new grant will allow low-income families in Pekin to spay or neuter their pets for almost nothing.

Tazewell County Animal Protective Society director Angela Blackman said pet owners can begin applying for the program this week.

TAPS received \$2,000 for spaying and neutering for dogs and cats, and \$1,500 to go for pressing medical issues for local animals.

She said spaying or neutering a dog usually costs between \$60 and \$80, and between \$45 and \$60 for a cat, but with the grant qualifying pet owners will only be charged about \$20, if they can contribute it.

"We are looking to help people who are having financial difficulties," she said. "We are taking it on a first-come, first-serve basis, based on qualifications. What we're trying to do is make this grant available to people who, if they didn't have this, they'd be surrendering their pet.

"For the health problems, maybe there is something that is a pressing health issue, (where) having some assistance with that would allow the pet to live out the natural life in the home. It's so heartbreaking when we get a 14-year-old dog who would rather be in the home."

She said TAPS will apply for the grant, made possible by the Jean M. Ligon fund of the Community Foundation of Central Illinois, again next year.

Blackman said that spaying and neutering dogs and cats in the community is always a top priority for TAPS, as it provides a large benefit to the owners and the community at large.

Cats can have up to eight kittens per litter, and can have as many as three litters a year, she said. Dogs can have two litters a year.

"There are only so many homes," she said. "And the big reason for spay(ing) and neuter(ing) is to prevent the overpopulation. Once pets have been spayed and neutered, they have a lot less of a chance of health risks down the road."

Male dogs and cats can avoid testicular cancer, and females can avoid ovarian cancer, among other diseases related to the reproductive organs, she said.

In addition, the male dogs especially have less of a tendency to go roaming once neutered.

"Dogs can smell a female in heat for up to two miles," she said. "(Neutered dogs) can still smell that but they aren't reacting to that sexual drive."

They'll stay closer to home, won't mark their territory and will be better behaved in general, she said.

TAPS functions on a combination of donations, grants and fundraising, she said.

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Wonderful! We are so lucky to have a place like TAPS in our area with such caring employees and volunteers. Congratulations to all who will benefit from this grant.

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