

Adopt Shelter Animal Pets (ASAP) – West Richland
"Improving the Lives of Homeless Pets in Our Community"

Annual Report

In May 2014, Adopt Shelter Animal Pets (ASAP) - West Richland will celebrate its one-year anniversary as a not-for-profit corporation. Early in 2013, a handful of volunteers with a passion for animal welfare set out to make a positive difference in the lives of homeless and abandoned pets in West Richland, Washington, and surrounding community. In the early months of this grassroots organization, ASAP leadership identified five key short-term goals. With support and expertise from ASAP's Board of Directors, community members, and the City of West Richland, ASAP proudly reports the following accomplishments:

- 1) **501(c)3 tax exempt status:** ASAP was officially designated a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization on January 10, 2014.
- 2) **Increase animal-related resources through expanded presence and support –**
 - **Foster and Adoptions** - ASAP's leadership team, along with key volunteers, participated in 11 major outreach events during the past year, accomplishing a 99% adoption rate for impounded animals in West Richland. The Harvest Fest, National Night Out, Veterans' Day Parade, and Hogs and Dogs were just a few of the community events in which ASAP participated with adoptable animals, educational materials, and tools to connect community members to future volunteer opportunities.
 - **Fundraising** - Key fundraising events, including the first annual Howl-O-Ween Walk for the Animals and Santa Paws, were extremely successful, meeting or exceeding our fundraising goals. ASAP is deeply thankful for the community support of these events, which provided critical funding for routine veterinary care, wellness checks, microchips, and spay and neuter services to unclaimed impounded or stray animals needing new homes.
 - **Advocacy** – Since formation, ASAP team members have testified before the West Richland City Council four times on behalf of the City's homeless and abandoned pets, resulting in a commitment by City Council to move forward on a proposed new animal control facility. A public forum on this important issue was held on March 25, 2014, with a follow-up City Council workshop scheduled for May 6, 2014. ASAP is committed to continuing advocacy for improvements to current shelter conditions—which include lack of staffing, no climate control, and no accessibility to the general public or ASAP team members.
 - **Community Presence** – ASAP has created a community presence and is now considered an animal welfare resource for the West Richland community.
 - ✓ In less than 10 months, ASAP's Facebook page has grown from 0 to more than 850 fans, with the majority residing in Richland and West Richland. Weekly

news shared through the Facebook site averages 4,500 views, with the highest post reaching more than 5,100 viewers.

- ✓ ASAP's website (asapwestrichland.com) was launched in July 2013 and serves as a resource for adoptable dogs, animal welfare news, and other relevant issues.
- ✓ ASAP provides constant accessibility and service to community members who are searching for lost pets, need to surrender their pets, or seek advice on behavioral issues for their pets.

3) Provide an opportunity for the community to engage and volunteer with a family-friendly, not-for-profit organization.

- In ASAP's first year, 89 volunteers ranging in age from 7 to 70 engaged in various ASAP outreach and adoption events, providing a total of **1,313** hours of service on behalf of homeless pets. This equates to \$29,620 (per 2013 independent sector equation-value of volunteers) in service given to the community, assisting ASAP in continuing its mission. Barriers to larger numbers of community involvement opportunities stem from inaccessible animal shelters, which is where most volunteers request to serve. ASAP will continue to seek opportunities for volunteer engagement and advocate for accessible shelters where "hands-on" volunteering with animals can be accomplished.

4) Establish an ongoing veterinary partnership - ASAP established a veterinary partnership with Pet Medical Center of Pasco on January 1, 2014, for routine veterinary care for impounded animals. Prior to ASAP's involvement, no routine veterinary care was provided, often creating a barrier to potential foster or adoptive placements. Thanks to this partnership as well as funds raised through fundraising events, all animals placed through ASAP now receive a wellness check, microchip, vaccinations, and spay or neuter, if appropriate. ASAP also added an Animal Care Coordinator position to its team to provide support and liaison for foster/adoptive families.

5) Raise funds for improved shelter conditions through grants, corporate, and individual support. The well-being of homeless and abandoned pets impounded at West Richland's current shelter took priority over shelter improvements in 2013, with leadership identifying a fundraising goal of approximately \$10,000 in veterinary costs based on impound numbers provided by West Richland Animal Control. In May 2014, ASAP will hold its first annual PawCasso Fundraiser, with the target to exceed this goal and then using additional funds to help kick-start ASAP's "Paws for a Cause" Shelter Improvements Campaign. ASAP also continues to seek a full-time grant writer to expand possibilities for larger funding opportunities. ASAP is appreciative of the corporate sponsors who aligned themselves with ASAP during its first year, including but not limited to Red Mountain Realty, Kadlec Medical Center, Pup Town Pet Grooming, Gesa Credit Union, Yokes/West Richland, Carrier Law, 3 Rivers Feed & Irrigation, P.S. Media, and Red Lion Hotels.

On the Horizon Continuing to advocate for the animals, educating our community on animal welfare issues, expanding our base of foster /adoptive placements and volunteers, and fundraising for continued shelter improvements are critical components to achieving ASAP's goal of effectively serving the homeless and abandoned pet population in West Richland. Developing a "physical presence" for ASAP will help to provide the visual component of our organization. 3 Rivers Feed & Irrigation (one of our corporate partners) has offered to become a drop site/donation center for ASAP, placing signage on their building, and providing a location for donations during normal business hours.

In addition, enhancements to our website, an online volunteer database, and other technology-based improvements are being planned to increase effectiveness and response time for serving both our two- and four-legged friends.

More recently, ASAP reached out to Animal Rescue Consultants, an organization that specializes in animal welfare, to better understand how to best serve the community and companion animals, given the current barriers faced with lack of City resources. As we wait for City of West Richland officials to determine their own course of action with regard to a proposed new animal shelter, ASAP must push forward, explore all potential partnerships, and chart our own course if we are to accomplish our mission of effectively serving the homeless and abandoned pet population of West Richland.

Our focus as an organization in the coming months will be to expand our leadership team and volunteer base. Recruiting for key leadership positions such as Grant Writer, Outreach Coordinator, Special Events Coordinator, and Fundraising Specialist will continue to be a priority. In addition, identifying key stakeholders who can align with ASAP to help provide a new shelter or sanctuary for homeless pets will be a team focus for the 2014-2015 year.

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as part of the ASAP team as President this past year. It has truly been a learning experience, and I am blessed to have met and worked with so many people who care about animals. I am excited about the year ahead, the opportunities to continue our work for the animals and wish to thank our ASAP supporters who are so critical to our success.

Respectfully,

Kelly Merrick, President
Adopt Shelter Animal Pets