

CRITTER NOTES

No More Homeless Pets receives grant to offer free spay and neuter of dogs and cats

No More Homeless Pets (NMHP) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that offers low-cost spay and neuter for dogs and cats. The goal of the group is to save lives by preventing unwanted litters of puppies and kittens. Normally the cost for surgery is \$40 for cats and \$60 for dogs. Recently, the animal welfare group received a \$34,000 grant from the Petco Foundation to offer free spay/neuter for low-income families. Additional services, such as vaccinations and parasite treatment, will still be available at reduced fees.

With the sizable grant for their Compassion for Animals by Reducing Euthanasia through Sterilization (CARES) program, the group can offer for free, 340 cat and 340 dog surgeries to Alachua County residents with proof of need. The program will launch on August 1 and last until all 680 surgeries have been completed.

For more information about CARES's requirements or other services offered by NMHP, contact (352) 376-6647, email operationpetsnip@gmail.com, or visit www.nmhp.net. The clinic is located at 4205 NW 6th St. in Gainesville, on the same property as the Alachua County Humane Society.

Dream Dogz hosts Open House at new training center

Dream Dogz, a dog training and behavior center operated by Victoria Warfel, is hosting an Open House at its new, 2700 sq. ft., air-conditioned facility on Sunday, August 28, from 1-3:30 pm. The event will offer responsible dog parenting tips, therapy dog and service dog information, and class demonstrations including Doga (dog yoga) and FUNgility. The event will also feature visits with Phoenix Animal Rescue dogs, vendors and a raffle. Refreshments will be available.

At Dream Dogz, our best friends can attend Dream Dogz University, earning degrees from Associate's to PhDog by successfully completing the requirements. Dream Dogz has also become well-known for the increasingly popular Totally Pit Bull courses, with participation by Phoenix Animal Rescue's Michelle Dunlap.

For more information, contact Dream Dogz at (352) 278-7404 or visit www.dreamdogz.com. For the safety of visitors' pets and the attending adoptable pooches, this event will be for humans only. Dream Dogz Training Center is located at 3909 NW 97th Blvd. in Gainesville, next to Aalataash Animal Hospital West.

Egg producers agree to humanely treat egg-laying hens

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has reached an agreement with United Egg Producers, the trade association for the largest egg producers in the country, to introduce federal legislation that will improve the treatment of the 280 million egg-laying hens used for food each year in the U.S. This legislation will be the first related to on-farm treatment of any species of farm

animal.

The legislation would end the use of battery cages, which are so crowded the hens can barely move, typically used to cut costs and increase egg production. Requirements will include nearly doubling the amount of space for each hen, allowing for natural behaviors such as nesting, perching, and scratching. Starvation, commonly used to change laying cycles, will be prohibited, as well as inhumane euthanasia practices. No company will be allowed to sell their eggs without abiding by these regulations.

To find out more about this legislation and help it pass, visit www.humanesociety.org.

Paws on Parole graduates 15th class on August 5

Alachua County Animal Services' (ACAS) 'Paws on Parole' will celebrate the Academy's 15th graduation day on August 5. To date the program, initiated in 2009, has placed 90 dogs into loving, forever homes.

For each Academy class, ACAS chooses 6 dogs after thorough health and behavior screenings at Animal Services. The dogs live with and are trained by inmates for 8 weeks at the Gainesville Correctional Institution Work Camp. Guided by professional dog training instructors and using only positive training methods, the handlers teach the dogs the basic obedience skills necessary to pass the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen test, thereby improving their chance of adoption.

Paws on Parole relies on the generous donations and support of the community. For more information about the program and available dogs from the graduating class, please contact Hilary Hynes at Animal Services, e-mail heh@alachuacounty.us or call (352) 264-6881. You can also visit on Facebook at www.facebook.com/paws.on.parole.

Manatee protection from high-speed zone hangs in the balance

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the City of Crystal River's Waterway Advisory Committee have proposed the elimination of the high-speed zone in Kings Bay, Crystal River. These waterways are a well-known home to manatees, which are protected by both state and federal law in Florida.

On July 7, 2011, the Citrus County Commission held the only public hearing on the issue. Many residents came out against the regulations, stating big government interference in their boating. Despite the recommendations of the FWS and the city's own advisory committee, the Commission is leaning towards rejecting the recommendation.

To support manatee protection in the City of Crystal River and Citrus County, go to www.savethemanatee.org and visit their Take Action! section to send an email message to officials regarding Manatees in Kings Bay. Letters may be sent to FWS at Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No FWS-R4-ES-2010-079, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM, Arlington, VA 22203. Comments are due by August 22.