

O'Malley PET support increases

BY MAGGIE FORBES

Contributing writer

Margaret Mead's famous quote reads "Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." A small group of committed people is trying to change the world for thousands of cats and dogs right here in Nacogdoches, and they are getting a lot of support to make that happen.

O'Malley PET (Preventing Euthanasia Together) is a local group working to reduce pet overpopulation.

"We're excited that we just received a \$4,800 grant from the ASPCA to purchase stainless steel cages. The cages are for animals awaiting or recovering from surgery. The additional cages tripled the number of animals we can handle on surgery day," said Michele Sprague, treasurer and volunteer coordinator for PET.

O'Malley PET is an offshoot of O'Malley Alley Cat, whose mission is to reduce the extremely high number of cat and dog euthanasia. In 2012 alone, 3,106 animals were euthanized because they could not be adopted. That's more than eight animals per day, seven days a week — a rate that is among the highest per capita in the state and country. These numbers are clearly unacceptable. We as a community should take responsibility.

The Nacogdoches community apparently agrees, as support for the group has come from many local sources. The Montgomery Humane Trust donated \$20,000 for medical care, and M&S Pharmacy donated more than \$700 from gift shop sales on a

single day in December of last year. Sandy Collier donated a \$100 prize from a related Facebook contest. A local restaurant, The Fish Place, donated a portion of their proceeds from one evening, while Girl Scout Troop 1810 donated pet food and other supplies. The City of Nacogdoches donates cat food and bedding on a regular basis.

Wanda "Secret Weapon" Jorgenson donates time, expertise and ingredients to sell cake balls. "The cake balls are delicious and have made us several hundred dollars a month this year," said Wendy Blount, the group's veterinarian. PET also has regular bake sales that feature Jorgenson's pies and other items. O'Malley has also applied for grants from the Texas Department of Health and Public safety (license plates fees) and PetSmart Charities.

To donate or learn more about supporting local spay and neuter clinics, visit omalley.pet.org. To find out if you qualify for the low cost spay or neuter, call 556-2754.

Maggie Forbes is grant coordinator and one of many clinic volunteers at the Nacogdoches O'Malley Alley Cat Organization, located at 611 N. Fredonia St.