



## Lakes Animal Friendship Society

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### COMMUNITY ANIMAL CARE EVENT A SUCCESS

Community and volunteer team help over 200 families improve the lives of their pets.

BURNS LAKE- At times the crates and kennels were lined up by the dozens with cats and dogs waiting for their turn to see the veterinarians. Lower income families from all corners of the Lakes District eagerly participated in the free animal health clinics offered at Southbank and the Lake Babine Woyenne Reserve. Many other families came by to help out, drop off snacks, ask questions, and watch the Canadian Animal Assistance Team carry out their work.

“The entire clinic is an educational event.” says Donna Lasser, Team Leader and founder of the Canadian Animal Assistance Team. “From admission through preparation, surgery, recovery and discharging the animals to their guardians – the community is invited to participate or observe. Our Team members take the time to explain each step in the process and invite all questions.”

All who observed the clinics were thoroughly impressed with what they saw. “The Canadian Animal Assistance Team for this project was made up of veterinarians, techs, and assistants from as far away as Calgary and Vancouver.” says Valerie Ingram of the Lakes Animal Friendship Society, which organized the event and clinics. “Their expertise and dedication is amazing. They take time away from their jobs, pay their way to travel to the clinics, and then work long hours under challenging conditions! We cannot thank them enough, but we also could not have pulled off the clinics without the support of our local community volunteers and donors.”

By all estimates, this hard work paid off. In what Donna Lasser described as “The busiest Canadian Animal Assistance Team clinic ever!” hundreds of families and their animals were helped. “Our original plan was to have three veterinarians available during the whole clinic, and our main target was to spay and neuter 250 animals.” says Donna. “We averaged two veterinarians per day due to scheduling conflicts. But, we still met our target with over 250 animals spayed and neutered, and many more were health checked, vaccinated and dewormed. In the end we figured we helped over 200 lower-income families.”

The event drew the attention of animal welfare groups across the northwest, and led to a roundtable meeting of animal welfare groups and other interested parties including local First Nations, the RCMP, and government representatives. Sherle Raitt of the Community Coalition for Animal Welfare facilitated the discussions. “Issues like pet overpopulation, animal abuse and neglect, and all their effects on the health of families and communities are not unique to Burns Lake.” says Sherle. “Communities all along the Highway 16 corridor have groups working to address local issues, but really we are talking about regional problems. It is time for everyone to work together, share ideas and resources, and push for

necessary change. The roundtable meeting was simply a first step in describing the shared vision, and developing a plan for our 'Community of Care'."

"We were overwhelmed with the response to the event." says Valerie Ingram. "There was simply not enough time to help all the families and animals that came out to the clinic or had inquired about it. Our community needs to take further steps to build on what we have achieved so far, and make progress. This will take commitment, and that means from the ground up. Support from our leaders is wonderful, but each individual needs to think about what they can do to make things better."

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with a Lakes Animal Friendship Society representative please phone 250 694 3696 or email [lakesidelegacy@yahoo.ca](mailto:lakesidelegacy@yahoo.ca).



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**A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL THE FOLKS WHO HELPED TO MAKE THE  
COMMUNITY ANIMAL CARE EVENT A SUCCESS!!!**

**Canadian Animal Assistance Team**

The Burns Lake Veterinary Clinic – without their strong support from day one the CAAT clinic would not have happened. We cannot count on a large clinic happening again, but thankfully our local vets are always there for the community in many ways including reduced rates for lower-income families.

Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Lake Babine Nation, Burns Lake Band, Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Burns Lake and District Community Foundation, Rio Tinto Alcan, Lakes District Maintenance, Turtle Gardens Animal Rescue, Southside Seniors Housing Society, Southside Health and Wellness Centre, Chief Louie Paddle Company, Grassy Plains School, LD News, LD Free Classifieds, SEDA, Audrie's Band, R8Design, Broken Camera, Flaming Pie, Redfern's, Takysie Lake Resort, Northside Store, Wild Thyme Farm, BC SPCA, Burns Lake and District Hospital, Village of Burns Lake, Overwaitea Foods, P&B Feeds, Keefe's Landing Cafe, the Martin Family, Gwynn's Green Grocer, Burns Lake Motor Inn, Burns Lake RCMP detachment, Bernadette Peebles

Our dedicated volunteers Lorna, Jan, Judi, Marissa, Helen, Alice, Brenda, Gail, Anna, Cherill, Riley, Lindsay, Melanie, Liz-Anna, Wouter, Senara, Matt, Castine, Dave, Justin, the Brauns, the Hummels, the Vanderwolfs, the McDonalds, the O'Mearas, Cynthia, Donna, the Gross family, the Fietz family, Kelly, Annemieke and everyone else who pitched in.

All the students, teachers and staff who helped contribute posters for the event. The positive messages and amazing artwork were enjoyed by everyone and many were taken by the crew as souvenirs of our community!

All the other animal welfare groups and government reps who participated in the event, including the Roundtable Meeting on Animal Welfare in Northern BC: Barb Gale from John Rustad's office, Community Coalition for Animal Welfare, Animal Rez-cue, Dogs Deserve Better Terrace and Hazelton, Northwest Animal Shelter Society, Kitimat Humane Society and North Paws Rescue.

All the individuals and families who gave donations at the clinics and community dinner or participated in the loonie auction!

And last but not least, all the people who trusted us with their loved and loving pets!!!

**THANK YOU!**

