



Department of Agricultural Resources' Massachusetts Animal Fund Spays and Neuters 526 Animals during Commonwealth Fix Event



Voucher recipient Samson.

The Department of Agricultural Resources' Massachusetts Animal Fund continued its effort to end animal homelessness in Massachusetts by spaying and neutering 526 dogs and cats during its inaugural Commonwealth Fix event, which ran from March 22 to March 28. These dogs and cats joined the 3,470 other animals in the Commonwealth that have been fixed since the Spay/Neuter Voucher Program began just nine months ago.

The Fund, established by a law that took effect in 2012 as a proactive measure to provide assistance for the wellbeing of Massachusetts' most vulnerable animals, works with animal control officers to distribute vouchers for free spay/neuter surgery for stray dogs and cats housed in animal control facilities and those dogs and cats owned by families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services for their pets. To date, the Massachusetts Animal Fund has disbursed \$178,950 for such surgeries.

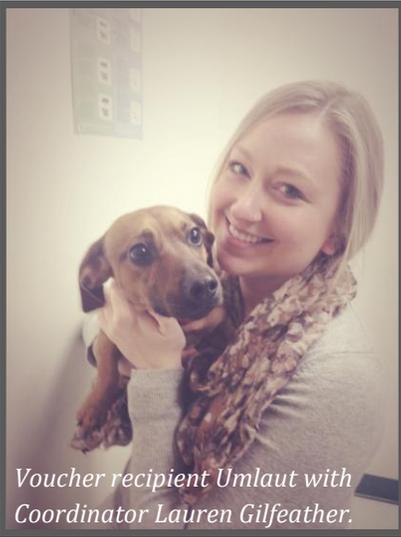
"The Massachusetts Animal Fund has been a godsend," said Leslie Harris, Executive Director of Dakin Humane Society. "A lot of animals are falling through the cracks with the grants that cover spay/neuter. The Fund helps these animals." The staff at Dakin Humane Society's Community Spay/Neuter Clinic fixed 40 dogs and cats during the Commonwealth Fix in addition to the 417 surgeries they completed since the clinic signed on as a provider late last year.

"Now that word is spreading about the Massachusetts Animal Fund Spay/Neuter Voucher Program our phones have been hopping with requests," said Pam Peebles, Animal Control Officer for the City of Springfield. "Listening to the stories from the pet owners who are calling for assistance is heartwarming and energizing. They often express financial desperation, yet a strong desire to do what is best for their pets. The high level of appreciation they express



Voucher recipient Little S.

reinforces what a relief this program is to pet homelessness in the Commonwealth.” Officer Peebles has requested 627 vouchers for Springfield dogs and cats over the last nine months.



Voucher recipient Umlaut with Coordinator Lauren Gilfeather.

The Spay/Neuter Voucher Program has been growing exponentially since its inception. In July 2014 the Fund disseminated 47 vouchers; in March 2015, over 1,400 vouchers were sent. Over 1,000 of those requests made in March were directly related to promotion of the Commonwealth Fix event.

“We hope that the growth of our program demonstrates to residents how many animals are in need,” said Lauren Gilfeather, Coordinator of the Massachusetts Animal Fund. “The Fund has the capacity to significantly—and rapidly—reduce animal homelessness in the Commonwealth, but can’t continue at this pace without additional funding. We are hopeful that now that the word is out about the program, we’ll see an increase in contributions from people who support our mission.”

Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux urges Massachusetts residents to invest in the responsible care of animals this tax season. Taxpayers can contribute to the Fund by donating on Line 32f of the 2014 state income tax return, or directly at <http://massanimalfund.com/donate>. Follow the Fund on Facebook (www.facebook.com/massanimalfund) and Twitter (@line32f) for the most up-to-date information about ending animal homelessness in the Commonwealth.