



4 PAWS 2014 Strategic Plan

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Introduction

In Lincoln Parish, there are two facilities that take in stray/abandoned dogs. One is 4 Paws, a self-funded non-profit, and the other is the City of Ruston Animal Control, funded by local taxes. In addition, there is another organization in the area that is funded by the Sheriff's department called Lincoln Parish Animal Control (LPAC). This organization does not have a facility and from what we understand, any animals that are picked up by the parish are brought to the City of Ruston Animal Control. The City of Ruston Animal Control has the capacity to shelter approximately 20 dogs that are picked up inside Ruston city limits. If a dog is not claimed within one week after being picked up, it is usually euthanized no matter the breed or state of health.

In 2013, according to the City of Ruston Animal Control (CRAC) Activity Report, they took in 1080 animals. Of the 1080, 86 animals were picked up by their owners, 50 animals were adopted, 945 animals were euthanized, and 6 animals were listed as dying. In addition, 224 were listed as dead on arrival. The math from the CRAC Activity Report doesn't quite add up, but it is easy to see that this is a huge problem for our Parish. Strays outside the city limits and within Lincoln Parish are allowed to be brought to 4 Paws when capacity allows, but currently we are not able to help animals that are found within Ruston city limits. The local system is broken.

CRAC is given approximately \$55 for each animal that it euthanizes. On the other hand, CRAC loses money by saving animals for adoption. Although the adoption fee is \$50 per animal, CRAC must spay or neuter each animal at a cost of \$35, give each animal rabies shots at a cost of \$10 per shot, and they must feed the animal during the interim. It is easy to see that CRAC makes its fees by euthanizing animals. Furthermore, it is our understanding that CRAC does not offer any vet care for their animals outside of these two events mentioned above. In 2013, CRAC received \$51,975 from the City of Ruston to euthanize the 945 animals listed on their activities report. The CRAC budget for 2014 is \$189,071. When we asked for a copy of the budget, we were not given the income portion of the budget so we do not know where the remainder of their budget comes from. In addition, the Lincoln Parish Animal Control officer is paid \$32,000 per year by the Sheriff's Department, yet this organization does not help any animal.

As the CRAC does not offer vet care, we are very concerned about the end of life experience for the animals in the shelter. CRAC is responsible for abuse calls, yet they provide no relief to these suffering animals. Furthermore, the euthanization method administered by the CRAC is a shot to the heart with no shot to calm them first.

In addition, of the animals from the Parish that we are allowed to care for, we are turning away at least 30 animals per week due to budgetary constraints. We do not know their fates. As you can see, there is a huge need for an organization like 4 PAWS in the city of Ruston and Lincoln Parish.

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” –Mahatma Gandhi

Right now, we are failing our animals but there is a solution that we have seen work in other Parishes and that is a partnership between the local government and the local shelter. First, Lincoln Parish needs to build a new, state-of-the-art facility that would house CRAC and 4 PAWS in the same location. This facility would be funded by government dollars and private donations. CRAC would take in the animals, quarantine them, evaluate them and then give them to 4 PAWS to care for and prepare them for successful reentry into a loving home. CRAC would continue to be funded by the local government agencies and 4 PAWS would continue to be funded by private donations. The only paid staff member for 4 PAWS would be the Shelter Manager. All other support roles would be volunteers. 4 PAWS welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the city and parish government to create a program that would provide loving, humane care for our animals that desperately need our support.

Who We Are and Where We’re Headed

Vision

We envision a Lincoln Parish where no animal will be neglected or abandoned, where every pet will be connected with its “forever” family, and where no healthy, socialized animal will *ever* have to be euthanized.

Mission

4 Paws Rescue, Inc. is a not for-profit organization dedicated to the well-being of stray, abandoned, and neglected dogs of Lincoln Parish. We strive to end euthanasia by requiring all adopted animals be spayed or neutered. We provide community education strongly advocating spaying and neutering, heartworm prevention and responsible pet ownership. Our mission is to make sure our rescued animals are healthy, socialized, and placed in loving and caring homes. Until that time we offer these precious creatures love, shelter, and care. We are here for them “until they all have a home.”

Where We Are Now

4 Paws Rescue, Inc. (4 Paws) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal rescue established in September 2005 by a caring group of citizens concerned about the overpopulation of stray and abandoned animals in Lincoln Parish. Since that time 4 Paws has adopted out over 1000 animals.

Community donations have sustained 4 Paws since 2005 and such generosity is a testament to the surrounding communities' commitment in helping to ensure the sustainability of 4 Paws despite ongoing economic difficulties. As a result of that commitment, in July 2012, 4 Paws reached a milestone when the organization purchased 18 wooded acres with a modest house and immediately installed 16 kennels, a large yard for the animals to run freely, and a small storage building for food and supplies. Caretakers reside in the home and provide 24/7 care for the animals currently being sheltered. The organization has since found that by having one cohesive location, adoption rates rise and more animals are brought to optimum health and find safe and loving homes.

Our goal is to clear the 18 wooded acres and begin building a facility that will initially shelter 100 dogs and 50 cats with room for expansion while continuing to provide a safe, loving shelter and vet care for the continual stream of stray and abandoned animals in our region.

4 Paws currently shelters approximately 80 dogs (current maximum), is at capacity 100% of the time and must turn away 30 dogs and cats per week. We do not know their fates. Our current goal is to continue rescuing as many animals as we can, bring them to health (including spay/neuter) then adopt them out to forever, loving homes while continuing to earmark donations for our building fund (currently at \$17,000). 4 Paws has sheltered and provided vet care for (including spay/neuter) approximately 400 dogs and cats in 2013 and 2014. From January 2014 to June 2014, 4 PAWs took in 206 animals and 198 have been adopted so far.

Until June 2013, 4 Paws was limited to having one or two animals spayed or neutered per week, per veterinarian, due to their understandable need to focus on their main practice and/or because of a temporary lack of 4 Paws funds. However, beginning in June 2013, we have worked with a mobile



veterinarian, Thomas Mobile Vet, who comes to our shelter twice a month to spay/neuter and vaccinate animals. This decreases our overhead by eliminating the need for transport to and from the veterinarian's office. Dr. Thomas can spay/neuter 40 animals per visit, using a minimally invasive procedure which also results in a shorter recovery time for the animal. In July 2013, 4 Paws was able to spay/neuter 33 shelter dogs using the mobile clinic's services at a rate of \$70 per animal for a total cost of \$2,310.00. We will continue to use our local veterinarians for our shelter animals' ongoing vet care, but we would like to increase our ability to provide more efficient spay/neuter vet care for stray and abandoned animals by utilizing Thomas Mobile Vet.

4 Paws survives through the hard work of volunteers, Board members and foster volunteers who give the animals homes, teach them social skills, and attend to needs as they become healthy and adoptable. Financial assistance is provided through fundraising as well as private and corporate donations.

To continue our successes, 4 Paws partnered with several local organizations. Students enrolled in animal science and pre-veterinary courses at Louisiana Tech and Grambling University routinely approach our organization to assist with projects and outreach initiatives. We plan to create an official relationship with pre-vet students which will give the student's hands-on experience and will give 4 PAWS a reliable group of qualified volunteers. Area veterinary clinics also work with us to provide health and wellness services to these animals. New Creations Veterinary, Ruston Animal Clinic, Sexton Animal Clinic, and Petstar Animal Clinic all provide spay and neuter services along with other medical treatments to the animals we serve, all at below-typical-market costs. Also, Paws of NELA of Ouachita Parish helps our organization connect pet owners with low-cost spay and neuter clinics outside of Lincoln Parish and also works with us to transport animals as necessary. Waggin' Tails Ranch in Jackson Parish collaborates with 4 Paws to take in animals when 4 Paws cannot.

Local businesses regularly display 4 Paws donation containers at their cashiers' stations as well as donate pet food and bring volunteers to our organization. The Ruston Daily Leader newspaper advocates for our organization, effectively marketing our program and encouraging the community to contribute to our mission. 4 Paws also recently successfully held a funding campaign offering ACH deposit forms which automatically deposit donations into 4 Paws' account at Bank of Ruston.

While 4 Paws' animal population constantly fluctuates, most animals in our shelter are not adopted out until they are healthy, spayed/neutered, and up to date on all vaccines. Often, we must delay an adoption because of poor animal health or injury, veterinarian scheduling or a temporary depletion of available funds. It is our belief that the more quickly we can have our animals spayed, neutered and brought to optimum health, the more quickly we can adopt them out to loving 'forever' homes, which opens a space for the next stray animal.

How We Are Going to Get There

Strategic Issues

Our first key area of focus in 2014 is in creating sustainable revenue for the shelter. To do so, we will look for opportunities to partner with local government. We will also aggressively pursue grants.

A second key focus will be on breaking the new building into specific areas and then seeking funding and/or support for those areas. We will develop partnerships with corporations and our local universities to assist us in moving closer to building a facility for the animals.

A third key focus must be on the acquisition of additional volunteers.

A fourth key area of focus is in strategically recruiting additional board members who can give their time, talent, and treasure to the organization.

A fifth key focus will be on education and community awareness. We recognize that without education nothing will change. Therefore, public education is one of our five key areas of focus in 2014.

Action Plan

Goal 1: Create sustainable revenue for 4 PAWS

Objective 1.1: Investigate best practices that have been used by other successful shelters.

Objective 1.2: Work with local and state government to create a successful partnership with 4 PAWS.

Objective 1.3: Research and apply for grants that align with the 4 PAWS mission.

Objective 1.4: We will hold two major fundraisers per year. These will become annual events. We will host a 5K, and we will raffle a large prize.

Goal 2: Complete the 'groundwork' for Phase 1 of our new facility

Objective 2.1: Divide the project into building components in order to seek out donations and/or sponsorships.

Objective 2.2: Seek out targeted sponsors for each component of the building project. For example, approach concrete companies to ask for the slab construction to be donated or done at cost.

Objective 2.3: For the remaining portions of the building fund, secure 50% of the funding needed to begin building from donors by December 31, 2014. To date, \$17,000 of \$250,000 has been raised.

Objective 2.4: Seek out a partnership with the LA Tech Architecture program for their students to donate their time and talents towards the 4 Paws building project.

Goal 3: Increase our volunteer base to cover all day-to-day operations of the shelter.

Objective 3.1: Continue expanding the use of social media to find and recruit new volunteers.

Objective 3.2: Improve programs to retain existing volunteers, in order to fill the volunteer schedule with 32 volunteers every week.

Objective 3.3: Create new initiatives to create community awareness of 4 Paws, its mission, and its need for volunteer workers. This could coincide with the educational program detailed in *Goal 5* below; for example, a presentation geared specifically to Greeks and other organizations at LA Tech and Grambling could both educate about responsible pet ownership and inform about 4 Paws mission and need for volunteers.

Goal 4: Strategically recruit new board members.

Objective 4.1: Identify key needs/gaps in the board's strengths and expertise. A working board, such as 4 Paws, needs a good balance of those who can provide strong advice or strong action; however, every board member must be willing to give of their time, talent, and treasure.

Objective 4.2: Develop an introductory package for potential board members. A 'board binder' would include a questionnaire for potential members,

Objective 4.3: Approach targeted, potential board members for recruitment.

Goal 5: Develop educational programs to combat the ignorance and apathy regarding neglected animals in Lincoln Parish.

Objective 5.1: Complete an analysis of the different target markets (adults/families, college students, children) and channels (media campaign, social media, face-to-face presentation, interactive play, etc.) that would be needed to "create a conversation" with each audience.

Objective 5.2: Create an educational program that can easily be adapted to each audience through each channel.

Objective 5.3: Seek out a collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of NCLA to provide an after-school program.

Objective 5.4: Partner with local school systems (elementary, secondary, and college) to provide either a special event during school hours and/or a curriculum which they can use to educate their students.

How We Will Stay on Course

Our measurement of success will be measured by the additional number of animals we will be able to provide spay/neuter services to, resulting in a reduced number of stray, abandoned animals in the region. Veterinarian care is the bulk of our monthly expenses and we will continue writing grants and conducting fundraising functions to ensure the continuation of our outreach to the many stray and abandoned animals in our region of the state.

Goal 1. We will know that we were successful in achieving our first goal if we have data on at least three other successful shelters which will enable us to emulate best practices, if we have an open, honest, and productive dialog with government officials, if we have applied for at least ten (10) grants that align with our mission, and if our funds allow us to serve all stray and neglected animals, with none turned away.

Goal 2. We will know that we were successful in achieving our second goal if we have the shelter plans broken down into individual components and we have asked local corporations to sponsor those components, if we have secured 50% of our funding, and if we have a relationship with the local architecture programs.

Goal 3. We will know that we were successful in achieving our third goal if we have at least 32 volunteers a week to assist with the care and feeding of the dogs and cats.

Goal 4. We will know that we were successful in achieving our fourth goal if we have at least four new influential board members by the end of 2014 that can offer strategic support to our organization.

Goal 5. We will know that we were successful in achieving our fifth goal if there is a decrease in the number of stray and neglected animals in Lincoln Parish.