

Milam Touch of Love Annual Report, 2021

Board President

Our second year has been crazy great. We have been able to serve more people and pets than we imagined. Thanks to two very important things, we were able to remain in full operation under the pandemic conditions. First, in January 2021, we established a relationship with Brinlee Veterinary Services, and second, our donors kept donating. So, when the resources we had used during our first year of operations quit accepting us, we made a seamless transition to Brinlee Veterinary Services, which benefitted both us and them.

Board of Directors

We have four members on our Board of Directors:

Board President: Jean Schara

Board Secretary/Treasurer: Meghan Land

Board Member: W. Mark McKibben

Board Member: Bonnie Wiesman

Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: Milam County domestic animals are cared for and provided for by responsible owners.

Mission: Milam Touch of Love is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit volunteer organization working independently to help in efforts to care for domestic animals, educate their owners and the community, and help them achieve responsible ownership goals.

We formed as a legal entity in the State of Texas on May 3, 2019.

Top Supporters

Our Top Individual Supporter has been Mr. Robert Bohner with total donations of \$11,000.

Our Top Organizational Supporters have been Laird Norton with an \$1,100 and Cameron Rotary Club with a \$1,000 donation.

Facebook has been a tremendous source of fundraising for us, bringing in \$15,059.24.

Donations Received

We have received large and small donations via our postal box, from checks and cash left for us with Cameron's Animal Control Officer (ACO), and at the various events where we've set up our outreach booth.

Financial Information

Through membership fees, donations, and fundraising efforts, we brought in \$71,550.31 from May 2019 through April 30, 2020.

As of April 20, 2020, we have \$8,308.67 cash on hand (most obligated for the next few months, but that does feel good).

Where did we spend your money?

\$39,622.09 was spent for our Snip and Chip monthly low cost spay and neuter program

\$10,316.60 was spent for our Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) program

\$2,739.47 purchased vaccines, flea treatment, and deworming medication for the shelters and to prepare animals for transport (doing our own distemper and bordetella vaccines costs us approximately 2/3 less than having a vet administer these vaccines)

\$1,422.65 went to purchasing microchips for snip and chip and our outreach efforts to microchip dogs and cats in Milam County

\$593.15 supported the Cameron and Rockdale Shelters for supplies

\$728.83 was spent for veterinary care for foster animals

\$214.10 was needed for shelter veterinary care

Our transport and transport preparation costs amounted to \$547

Kitten and Dog Foster programs accounted for \$1,619.91 with an additional \$1,354.06 spent for equipment and supplies for our fosters.

We had \$1,489.55 in operating costs, including PayPal, bank fees, postage (a lot of thank you notes), and shipping charges for our vaccines.

We had \$855 in charitable contributions (we donated for a police dog vest and for a surgery for a puppy we'd sent to Colorado who turned out to have a significant problem)

There were also \$1,739.23 spent to purchase T-shirts to sell and related expenses.

This totals \$63,241.64 in expenses for our second fiscal year.

Programs Implemented

- We added Central Texas Ruffugees as a rescue partner. They are a foster-based rescue located in Austin who ships primarily to the Northeastern United States.

- We obtained funding to begin a May Day Spay program for people who simply cannot afford to spay their dog and had our first participants earlier this month. With this program, we hope to avoid that first unwanted litter of puppies.
- Large scale TNR. We have done Trap Neuter and Return on a small scale, but we held our first large scale TNR event and TNRed 38 cats from the Cameron and Rockdale communities.
- Barn Cat Days - A low cost event where people can bring their barn cats and porch cats in to get them spayed and neutered to prevent the birth of more outside cats.
- In May 2020, we began housing county dogs at our own expense. Throughout the year, we housed 27 county dogs, got them spayed/neutered, vaccinated, heartworm tested, and treated if necessary, and found them homes, either locally or through rescues. Our donors covered the approximately \$5000 cost to do this, and Casa McKibben, for the most part, donated the boarding space, which is not included in the cost listed.
- In April 2021, Milam County voted to donate \$5000 to MTOL, it doesn't count for this fiscal year, because we received it in May; however, when this happened, we met with the Sheriff and his key personnel and made an informal agreement to take dogs they pick up. We have received cooperation from both the Cameron and Rockdale Shelters to temporarily house these dogs on a space available basis. We have had tremendous results so far, but we are keeping the program quiet, because the demand is so great. We want this cooperation to grow, but we have to obtain more resources before it can become more widely available.

Highlights of Accomplishments

Over 64 dogs and cats sent on freedom rides to CO, Texas Humane Heroes, and the Northeastern US.

266 dogs were spayed or neutered and 290 were vaccinated against rabies

Our Facebook group membership grew from 2562 to 3610

We're up to 28 participants on Amazon Smile with our most recent earnings being \$49.96

We have microchipped 547 pets since we began performing this service in December 2019

Established May Day Spay Program, which will be implemented in May 2021

Our first large scale TNR event — 38 cats spayed/neutered, vaccinated against rabies, and returned to their colonies in Rockdale and Cameron

For at least two families, our Low Cost Spay and Neuter programs and Spay the Mama programs have allowed them to break the cycle of unwanted reproduction. I'm sure there are more we aren't aware of.

We began writing a weekly column for The Cameron Herald.

Success Stories

We began our relationship with Dr. Brinlee in January 2020, but neither of us had any idea who beneficial it would be to both of us. Thanks to our donors, we were able to sponsor a low cost event every month in 2020, and we established a rhythm for them in 2021. We have sites in Cameron, Milano, Minerva, and Davilla where we can host events.

Two hundred and three community cats are not having kittens. We understand this is a drop in the bucket, but we have to begin somewhere.

We received funding from the Cameron Rotary Club and donations from members to establish a Super Foster Site (a set of three kennels and an exercise yard) at a central location in Milam County. This site is nearly ready for hosting county dogs. We have half the volunteer Foster Care Team we need to begin operation (we need three more volunteers who can commit to working together to ensure this site is cared for at least once and preferably twice a day).

The demand was so great for spaying and neutering feral/outdoor cats, that Dr Brinlee offered to hold a Barn Cat Day. People schedule their barn cats and porch cats, and they pay \$50 per cat to get them spayed/neutered, ear-tipped, and an undocumented vaccination against rabies. Porch cats are where feral cat colonies come from. The more porch cats we can get spayed and neutered, the fewer community cat colonies we'll have to track down and spay and neuter. We're grateful for all the people willing to get their porch cats and barn cats spayed and neutered.

We cultivated a new rescue partner relationship with Central Texas Ruffugees, a foster-based rescue located in Austin. They have been willing to offer our dogs to rescue partners throughout the US (mostly in the Northeast), and many of our dogs have been accepted.

Last May, we began taking in county dogs, usually at the request of the Milam County Sheriff's Department but sometimes at citizen's request. This was an informal arrangement, but we housed 27 dogs, got them vetted and adopted or transferred to rescues.

In April of this year, when the Milam County Commissioners voted to make a donation to Milam Touch of Love to allow us to help county dogs, we contacted the Milam County Sheriff's Department and met with Sheriff Clore and his key team members and discussed a way we could support the county's needs for homeless dogs, and, to a lesser extent, cats. We devised an intake form for them to use to report dogs, we obtained support from the Cameron and later the Rockdale City Shelters for kennel space on a space available basis. We have quietly been able to help six county dogs in April, with 3 of them being returned to their owners, one being adopted, and two more awaiting forever homes (we learned earlier this month that one of those two does have an owner, and he has been reunited).

- Two of our directors decided to take advantage of the state offered Animal Control Officer's Course in December, and W. Mark McKibben and Jean Schara are now state-certified Animal Control Officers.

- With funds raised from the Capital City Racing Club lunch, Carolyn Vinton and Cryal Denman donated the proceeds to Milam Touch of Love for the purpose of establishing a May Day Spay program. This program is intended for people who truly cannot afford even a low cost spay. This program is being implemented in our 2021-2022 fiscal year, and we already have two beneficiaries and an additional donation to help sustain it.

Beneficiary Data

We are aware of a large population in Milam County who loves their pets but does not have the means to do all the things considered essential for “responsible pet owners.” Our goal is to help these people achieve this through low cost or no-cost spay/neuter events. For now, we rely on our Animal Control Officers and our community volunteers who know the small community they live in to know who is truly in need. Over time, we’ll develop other ways to means test people, but we want to maintain their dignity as well.

Vision for the Year Ahead

We plan to continue freedom rides to Colorado and the Northeast — spaying the mama dog allows the family to keep their pet while not having to worry about finding good homes for the puppies — breaking the cycle of unwanted animals. We are seeking not only more rescue partners but more transport coordinators to work with our partners to ensure dogs are visible and ready for transport.

We plan to continue microchipping as many dogs and cats as possible without worrying if people can pay. We don’t ask for money at our microchipping events, but the donation jar is there. If people ask us, we tell them we suggest a donation of \$10. If they don’t ask, we don’t ask.

We plan to expand our Snip & Chip to communities as we find sponsors. Some will be free and some will be low cost. The demand has a been great, so we are thinking of adding a full cost spay and neuter event each month until we obtain more sponsors.

We are still seeking community cat managers. As we learn the terrain — many cat communities are already out there — we’ll coordinate with the colony manager to get their colony spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped. We’ll also seek to get community cat language written into city ordinances to legitimize not only well-managed communities but to allow them to exist safely. We plan to work with a group that will help us understand the right way to do this process.

Finally, we will expand our education services. We’ve been seeking the right tone for our efforts. We don’t want to preach to people. We want to offer useful lessons they can apply to improve the

quality of lives for their pets. As people volunteer with us, they learn more about what we offer to the community and share with their friends.