

## FAQ

*Spay/Neuter (S/N) reduces intake pressure at the lowest cost so existing shelters can function better, not just bigger.*

**Why prioritize S/N instead of building or expanding shelters?**

Because S/N **prevents animals from entering shelters in the first place**. Shelters respond after animals are already homeless or at risk. S/N addresses the root cause: uncontrolled breeding. Prevention reduces suffering, intake, and long-term costs.



**Do we still need shelters?**

Yes - absolutely! Shelters are essential for emergencies, cruelty cases, and animals already in crisis. **But shelters work best when they are not overwhelmed**. S/N lowers intake so shelters can provide better care, higher live-release rates, and fewer euthanasia\* decisions.



**Does S/N really save lives?**

Yes - at scale! One surgery prevents dozens to hundreds of future animals from being born into homelessness, neglect, or euthanasia. It saves lives before those lives are ever at risk.



**Isn't sheltering more immediate and visible?**

**Sheltering is visible; S/N is transformative.** Shelter care helps one animal for a limited time. S/N creates **compounding, long-term impact** with measurable reductions in future suffering and public cost.



**Why not focus on "responsible pet ownership" instead?**

Education matters—but **access matters more**. Cost, transportation, and availability are real barriers for many families. When affordable S/N is accessible, participation rises and shelter intake drops. Access drives behavior.



\*More than 950 cats and dogs are killed in shelters across the country every day. (Source: Best Friends)

**What about animals already on the streets or in danger?**

They still need help—and S/N helps them too. By reducing future intake, S/N **freed shelter resources** for emergencies, cruelty cases, and hard-to-place animals. It shrinks the crisis instead of perpetuating it.

**Is S/N cost-effective?**

Extremely. A single S/N surgery often costs the same as a short shelter stay for one animal, but it prevents many animals from ever needing shelter care at all. It's one of the **highest-return investments in animal welfare**.

**Does this really make a difference in our community?**

Yes. Communities that invest in S/N consistently see:

- **Lower shelter intake**
- **Reduced euthanasia**
- **Healthier pet populations**
- **Lower long-term public and nonprofit costs**

Prevention works when it is adequately funded.

**What does my donation actually do?**

Your gift funds a **permanent solution**, not a temporary fix. Every surgery supported is a future crisis avoided—and suffering prevented.

**What is the bottom line?**

This is not an either/or choice. Shelters respond to suffering. **S/N prevents it.**

**If the goal is fewer animals suffering in the future at the lowest cost to families, shelters and the community overall, S/N is the most cost-effective, result-effective, humane, and responsible first investment.**

**'A Tails of Hope Fund'**  
for endowment has been  
established at



**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
OF WESTERN PA & EASTERN OH



# STILL NOT CONVINCED?

## YOU MAY SAY

**“But we still need shelters.”**

Shelters are essential for injured, abused, and truly homeless animals. But when communities rely on shelters *without* investing in prevention, shelters become overwhelmed, stressed, and forced into impossible decisions.

S/N doesn't replace shelters—it **reduces intake so shelters can do their jobs better**, with higher live-release rates, better care, and fewer animals suffering confinement or euthanasia\*.

Shelters are still needed. But ***shelters work best when they are the last line of defense, not the primary strategy.*** Prevention strengthens the safety net.

## EXPERTS SAY

***Absolutely—and Spay/Neuter makes shelters work!***

## YOU MAY SAY

**“Shelters save lives right now. Spay/Neuter feels indirect.”**

Shelters intervene after harm has already occurred. S/N animals from being born into neglect, abandonment, or euthanasia in the first place.

From an ethical standpoint: ***Saving one animal today is good. Preventing hundreds from ever suffering is better.***

S/N is not indirect—it's **upstream impact with downstream life-saving results.**

## EXPERTS SAY

***Spay/Neuter is the only strategy that saves lives before they are at risk.***

## YOU MAY SAY

**“People should just be responsible pet owners.”**

In Western PA, as in many regions: ● Veterinary care is limited or unavailable in some areas ● Cost is a real barrier for many families ● Transportation and time off work matter.

Low-cost, accessible S/N doesn't excuse irresponsibility—it **removes structural barriers** so people can do the right thing. Many people don't want to surrender their pets, they just need a little support.

Data consistently shows: When S/N is accessible, **participation increases and shelter intake drops.**

## EXPERTS SAY

***They should — but access determines behavior.***

\*More than 950 cats and dogs are killed in shelters across the country every day. (Source: Best Friends)

## YOU MAY SAY

“What about emergencies, cruelty cases, and strays already here?”

No one is arguing against caring for animals already in crisis. The question is whether we want the crisis to continue indefinitely.

S/N: ● Reduces the number of future cruelty victims ● Shrinks the stray population over time ● Frees shelter resources for true emergencies.

It's the difference between **endless triage and real progress**.

## EXPERTS SAY

Those needs don't disappear—but they shrink.

## YOU MAY SAY

“Donors like visible buildings and rescues.”

S/N offers donors something rare: ● Measurable outcomes ● Predictable cost per impact ● Long-term system change ● Compounding return on investment (ROI).

For donors who care about effectiveness, prevention is not less compelling - it's **more compelling**.

## EXPERTS SAY

But smart donors fund what works.

Buildings feel tangible—but impact matters more than appearances.

## YOU MAY SAY

“Isn't this just a drop in the bucket?”

Animal overpopulation grows exponentially, not linearly. That means **prevention compounds**.

Every surgery funded today prevents: ● Multiple litters per year ● Many more animals over the next several years ● Future shelter intake, euthanasia, and public costs.

Few charitable investments offer this kind of multiplier effect.

## EXPERTS SAY

No — because reproduction is exponential.

***This isn't an either/or choice between shelters and Spay/Neuter.***

It's a question of **where your dollar does the most good**.

● Shelters respond to suffering. Spay/Neuter prevents it.

● Communities that invest in both—with prevention leading—see the greatest success.

If the goal is fewer animals suffering in the future at the lowest cost, S/N is the indispensable first investment.



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