To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager
Subject: Letters of Interest – Volunteer Animal Organization Partners
Date: April 27, 2014

Attached please find two letters of interest regarding partnering with the City on the operation of the Evanston Animal Shelter from The Anti-Cruelty Society and Saving Animals for Evanston (SAFE).

I am recommending that the City’s Board of Animal Control review these letters and work with staff to develop a Request for Proposals to submit to these two groups in the next several weeks.

Attachments
Letter from Anti-Cruelty Society
Letter from Saving Animals for Evanston
April 16, 2014

Wally Bobkiewicz
City Manager
City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, IL  60201

Dear Mr. Bobkiewicz,

The Anti-Cruelty Society would like to submit this letter of interest to the City of Evanston in response to the request for qualifications Evanston Animal Shelter Volunteer Animal Organization Partner.

We are a comprehensive animal welfare organization that has been serving the needs of animals in our community since 1899. We are an open admission shelter and will not turn away any animal in need. Our mission is “Building a community of caring by helping pets and educating people.” I have attached our statement of values and philosophies.

In addition to adopting more than 4000 cats and dogs every year, we have an affordable spay/neuter clinic that anyone can use and we perform more than 9000 sterilizations each year, we offer a charity veterinary clinic to low-income pet owners, we have humane educators who teach compassion and respect for living beings, we have licensed humane investigators who respond to reports of cruelty and neglect, we have a School of Dog Training and a free Behavior Hotline. We also offer euthanasia services for pets whose quality of life is compromised and whose owners cannot afford to have a veterinarian provide this important and compassionate service.

We have robust volunteer programs and have almost 600 dedicated volunteers. Last fiscal year, our volunteers donated 31,073 hours of service! Our volunteers perform many tasks including making enrichment items, toys, and beds for the animals, walking dogs, socializing cats, organizing supplies, greeting guests, and helping with special events. We currently have 85 foster homes.

Our senior staff consists of myself, David Dinger, Vice President of Operations, Dan Overstreet, Vice President of Finance and Business Administration, and Leslie Villasenor, Vice President of Development. We have a total of 104 employees, including six veterinarians.

We are a non-profit organization and currently have 13 members on our Board. Martin Gross is the Chairman, Daniel S. Jaffee, Immediate Past Chairman, Barbara McLucas, Vice Chairman, Freeman Wood III, Treasurer, and Dr. Sheldon Rubin, Secretary. The four other Executive
Committee members are Sandra P. Manne, Elliott Otis, Celeste Stevens, and Constance Steinhaus. Michael Grossman, Barbara Provus, Carole Wood, and Steven Klein are the other Board members. Honorary Board members are, Dr. Lester E. Fisher, Shirley Gambill, Michael Kuzma, Alvin Shapiro, and Gloria Vaughan.

Our behaviorists created a methodology of assessing behavior for both cats and dogs more than 10 years ago before other methods had been developed. Recently, we implemented ASPCA’s SAFER® Assessment tool for dogs and continue to do our own assessments on cats. We do not support breed specific legislation, we treat every animal as an individual and will place bully breeds in homes. We do not adopt aggressive animals. We utilize the five freedoms (attached) as our basis for animal welfare and adhere to the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters developed by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians.

We currently have partnerships with Lambs Farm to provide pets for adoption at their facility in Libertyville. We have cats for adoption in four PetSmart® stores, including one in Evanston, and at Paradise 4 Paws at Midway. Last fall, we opened the Every Day Adoption Center in PetSmart South Loop store where we adopt both cats and dogs. This weekend we did our 500th adoption at that store. We currently have more than 200 transfer partners! I am proud to say that we have a reputation for and history of helping, sharing, and collaborating.

We are interested in discussing ways we may be able to partner with the City of Evanston to work towards our mutual goal of no more homeless pets. Please let me know if you need further information or have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robyn Barbiers, D.V.M.
President
In order to develop a document that was relevant to a broad range of entities caring for companion animals, the task force chose to model the document along the lines of the five freedoms. The concept of Five Freedoms originated with the Report of the UK Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems, the Brambell Report, December 1965. The concept was subsequently refined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council so that it actually took the form of the five freedoms. It has since been further updated and is now the most visited page on the Council’s Website. These principles are relevant and appropriate measures of welfare for any animal species and the task force tried to be mindful of them throughout the process.

**Freedom from Hunger and Thirst**
By ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor.

**Freedom from Discomfort**
By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

**Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease**
By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

**Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour**
By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

**Freedom from Fear and Distress**
By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
The Anti-Cruelty Society is Committed to Caring

Founded in 1899, The Anti-Cruelty Society, also known as the SPCA of Illinois, has evolved from an organization advocating for children and horses to the largest private, open-admission animal welfare organization in Chicago. Our doors are open for any animal in need, 365 days a year, as we continue building a community of caring by helping pets and educating people.

We shall:
- Intervene to prevent cruelty to animals
- Provide low- or no-cost spaying or neutering
- Provide compassionate care for any animal in need
- Partner with the community to educate about animal issues and inspire compassion and respect
- Attempt to find a home for every healthy or rehabilitatable cat or dog that comes through our doors

We will provide the best quality animal care through:
- Collaboration – only through partnerships and relationships can we achieve our mission
- Excellence – we will strive to have a best-practice model in all that we do
- Professionalism – we will act with integrity and in an ethical manner
- Leadership – we will plan for the next generation of issues that will impact our organization, our community, and pets
- Communication – we will fearlessly outline and communicate our commitment to being advocates for animals
- Transparency – we support the Asilomar Accords and proudly and publicly report our statistics

The Anti-Cruelty Society believes:
- In an open-door policy – we will not turn away any animal in need
- There should be no time limits placed on any animal in our care
- That no healthy or rehabilitatable pet should be euthanized
- The key to pet overpopulation is sterilization
- That education can prevent cruelty, abuse, and neglect and promote responsible pet ownership
- If an animal’s quality of life is severely compromised, euthanasia is the humane alternative
Dear City Manager Bobkiewicz:

Please accept this as our response to the City’s Request for Qualifications for the VAO agreement with the Evanston Animal Shelter.

1. **Background on the organization including existing operations, mission, vision and values of group.**

Saving Animals for Evanston (SAFE) was formed in 2013 as a 501(c)3 organization with the mission of working with the Chief Animal Warden to place dogs in rescue that had been slated for euthanasia at the Evanston Animal Shelter. The organization was primarily self-funded by the founders, but we did solicit some contributions from friends, family and co-workers. Thus far we have worked with the City to rescue more than 20 dogs.

We understand that not every dog can safely be placed in the community, but we believe that every dog’s situation should be reviewed carefully before a decision to euthanize is reached. Alternatives should include evaluation by a professional animal behaviorist, placement in a foster home to alleviate kennel stress or to work with behavior modification protocols, or transfer to a rescue organization that might be more qualified to address the dog’s special needs.

The primary purpose of SAFE from its formation until now has been to cover the costs for these rescued dogs that were not covered by either the previous VAO or the City. These included fees for evaluations and training by professional trainers, boarding for dogs pending transfer to rescue or a foster home, and medical expenses (primarily spay/neuter fees but also extraordinary expenses when needed).

Our Facebook page features some of the animals that were saved: [https://www.facebook.com/safeevanston](https://www.facebook.com/safeevanston)
2. Experience in working in the area of animal adoption and care.

We are all long-term volunteers at the Evanston Animal Shelter, and are experienced with most of the major functions of the shelter. Besides serving as canine and feline crew members, our experience as volunteers is as follows:

Vicky Pasenko – 7 years (Shift Supervisor, Canine Adoption Counselor)

- **Shift Supervisor.** Oversees the entire crew on her shift, both dogs and cats.
  - Handles the intake of animals brought in by citizens or the police.
  - Addresses any unusual occurrences on the shift including medical concerns.
  - Manages end-of-day paperwork, including volunteer and animal tracking, financial transactions, and medical and intake records.

- **Canine Adoption Counselor.** Screens and interviews potential adopters to help match them with appropriate dogs for their lifestyle.
  - Conducts post-adoption follow-up to address issues that arise in the home.
  - This position requires extensive knowledge of shelter paperwork, including medical and City recordkeeping.

Alisa Kaplan – 3 years (Canine Kennel Captain, Adoption Counselor)

- **Canine Kennel Captain.** Supervises weekly kennel crew, trains new volunteers, enforces safety and other rules.
- **Canine Adoption Counselor.**

Cathy Roberts – 5 years (former Canine Medical Director and former Kennel Captain)

- **Canine Medical Director.** Ensures dogs receive required vaccinations, fecal and heartworm tests, and other medical care on intake and during their stay at the shelter.
  - Schedules spay/neuter appointments and works closely with McCormick and other veterinarians regarding medical needs, special diets, etc.
- **Former Canine Kennel Captain.**

Jenny Grist – 4 years (Feline Cage Captain, Feline Adoption Counselor)

- **Feline Cage Captain.** Supervises cat volunteer crews, trains new volunteers, enforces safety rules, oversees medication administration and other feline needs.
- **Feline Adoption Counselor.** Screens and interviews potential adopters to help match them with appropriate cats for their lifestyle; conducts post-adoption follow-up.
In addition, for the past two years we have been the sole volunteers aiding Chief Animal Warden Teckler in rescue operations at the shelter. As part of the rescue process, we have:

- **Formed relationships** with rescue organizations, rescue-friendly boarding facilities and trainers, veterinarians (including McCormick Animal Hospital), and Animal Control Officers in neighboring jurisdictions.
- **Fostered** Evanston animals in our homes. We have extensive foster experience, including animals with behavioral and medical issues.
- Provided animals with **both routine and extraordinary medical care**.
- **Coordinated transport operations** of animals to various facilities, rescues, and foster homes around the region and in neighboring states.

3. **List of current board members, staff and number of volunteers currently associated with organization.**

As outlined above, there are currently four unpaid board members: Jenny Grist, Vicky Pasenko, Alisa Kaplan, and Cathy Roberts. If SAFE’s mission expands, so will its Board and associated volunteers.

Because C.A.R.E. is still at the shelter, the shelter volunteers are currently still working under their umbrella. However, the shelter volunteer base is strong and there has been a very positive response to the City’s request for volunteers. Between current volunteers who are staying, people who had left who are returning, and new volunteers, there are sufficient resources to manage the needs of the animals as we move forward.

4. **Statement of organization’s philosophy of animal evaluation.**

We believe our philosophy of animal evaluation is consistent with the City’s. The ASPCA’s SAFER® behavior evaluation should be used to provide basic information about a dog. However, an evaluation is only one piece of the puzzle. There should be information gathered from the volunteers who work with the animals as well as veterinary staff, City employees, etc. All of this information should be written down (on paper or ideally in a computer system) and used to make a decision about the disposition of the animal.

Each dog should have an exit strategy as soon as its stray hold is over. This could include the following:

- Further evaluation by a professional animal behaviorist, perhaps followed by a professional training period
- Placement in a foster home (particularly for situations of kennel stress or behavior modification)
- Placement for adoption, with immediate advertising and participation in adoption events
- Placement with a rescue
- If unavoidable, euthanasia
We understand that the Chief Animal Warden ultimately has the responsibility to make these decisions. We have experience working closely with the Animal Warden to help place dogs in rescue and we believe that relationship would continue to be successful. We also understand that all of the steps outlined above require special focus, and we plan to assign Administrative Directors to manage the foster care, rescue, and training/behavior modification programs, as well as fundraising, administrative, and logistical functions. This will ensure appropriate focus on each task.

5. Other pertinent information on qualifications of organization to partner with the City of Evanston in operation of Evanston Animal Shelter.

SAFE is uniquely qualified to serve as a partner to the City of Evanston at the Animal Shelter. Our members are long-term shelter volunteers, and over the past year and a half we have worked closely with Chief Eddington, Deputy Chief Wazny, Commander Pickett, Chief Animal Warden Linda Teckler, and several elected officials to help the City understand the situation at the shelter and work toward resolution of key issues. We initially provided a document to the city that outlined shelter Best Practices, and those Best Practices served as the basis for the ASPCA review. We were also present during the Janice Triptow review and provided some of the data that was used by Ms. Triptow to make her recommendations. In addition to our familiarity with the issues of the past, we are aware of the challenges of the facility. We believe that some of the facility’s shortcomings can be offset by changes in procedure and reorganization of space.

Our approach to this proposed partnership differs from the approach of the previous VAO in several ways:

- We believe that the steps the City has taken by issuing the new Animal Control Policy and creating the oversight Board are important to the future operation of the shelter. The City should own shelter operations and the VAO should support the City.

- Assistance from the VAO should include:
  - Maintaining a volunteer force that provides for the daily care of the animals.
  - Helping to place animals via adoption, rescue, or foster.
  - Developing programs that assist the community such as providing spay/neuter and vaccination clinics at low or no cost. This helps reduce the pet population and the number of animals in the shelter. Evanston has a very manageable overpopulation problem. Therefore, spay/neuter programs - which we do not have now - could have a dramatic impact.
  - Developing programs that help senior citizens and other vulnerable individuals keep their companion animals in their homes.
  - Working to promote the Animal Shelter as a vital part of the community through outreach to youth groups and other organizations that may not currently know about the shelter.
Other relevant experience.

In addition to our experience with animals, our professional qualifications add value to our shelter work. Our members have experience in:

- Management
- Marketing
- Administration
- Research
- Education
- Customer service

Vicky Pasenko is an Operations Director for a major technology company. In this role she manages a team of 85 people, in support of a business unit that includes 1200 consultants, 100 sales representatives, and drives annual revenue of approximately $400M.

Cathy Roberts worked as a purchasing agent for an aerospace subcontractor and a purchasing manager for an automotive subcontractor. She lives in Evanston and has a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

Alisa Kaplan worked as a brand strategist for a marketing firm in New York before moving to Evanston to get her law degree and Ph.D. from Northwestern. She teaches law courses at Northwestern’s School of Continuing Studies.

Jenny Grist is the audience engagement manager at Facets, a nonprofit arts organization. An Evanston resident, she works with schools to set up field trips, plan special events, and oversee customer service issues for children's programs, cinema, and media distribution.

Potential partnerships with other organizations

We would be happy to consider partnering with other organizations who could complement our own expertise and resources, either on a short- or long-term basis. For example, the ASPCA has a three month “Strategic Planning” program where it works with shelters that want to achieve certain goals. We would welcome the opportunity to enter into such an agreement to ensure our facility is employing best practices in sheltering. We are open to other arrangements as well.

In addition, PAWS Chicago has offered their services as a resource to us. Their involvement could include allowing our volunteers to go through their volunteer training program, which focuses on handling skills and behavior modification protocols; use of their mobile spay/neuter vehicle for spay/neuter events, and participation in their multi-organization adoption events.

In sum, SAFE represents a seamless transition, volunteer-based service, demonstrated partnership with the EPD, experience building relationships with outside agencies, and effective fundraising to support activities at the shelter. We believe a relationship between SAFE and the City would greatly benefit both the animals and the Evanston community.