

Paws for the Cause

Humane group raises funds and awareness.

By Sharon Allen Gilder

The Almanac

TPC at Avenel's Chesapeake Room was transformed into a gallery of boutiques, festive dining, and camaraderie on Nov. 14 as 100 animal lovers "paws-ed" and convened for Friends of Montgomery County Animals' (FMCA) annual fall luncheon fundraiser. Table centerpieces featured Richard Denfield's edible bird houses noted for their beauty, whimsy, and practicality, enhanced with evergreens and holly clipped by Winnie Reed, the group's treasurer, from her landscape at Amberlea Farm in North Potomac.

Denfield and 10 other vendors displayed their finery and donated 20 percent of their proceeds to FMCA. The Surrey Two, Betty Jane's Sweet Delights, JT Interiors, Arts of Asia, Mike Kay's Soaps, Mystic Threads, Karen Kay's Cakes, Deco Jewelry, and Curiosity Antiques provided shopping pleasure for attendees. An animal-themed gift basket from Flora's Feathered Nest, Redskins' tickets donated by the Reeds, and an item donated by each vendor from their inventory were door prizes. Previously purchased raffle tickets for two drawings provided the opportunity in the first drawing to be the winner of a \$1,200 gift certificate to the Inn at Little Washington and in the second drawing, to be the winner of both one \$200 certificate to Renato's at River Falls, and one \$200 certificate for the Tavern at River Falls.

FMCA, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) humane organization with no shelter, was established in 1974. Only 12 percent of monies raised are used for non-animal support for example, to pay for the professional preparation of an annual CFC (Combined Federal Campaign) application, printing costs and postage. Annual \$35 dues help underwrite the organization's projects. Members receive two newsletters per year and invitations to fundraising events.

The new year will find the group gearing up to celebrate its 40th anniversary. "We have come a long way in size and scope from a handful of people interested in fundraising for large animal rescue," said Claire Proffitt, Potomac resident and FMCA president. "We are still unique in our mission to help other humane groups financially in emergency situations and to help families and individuals keep their pets, but the majority of our resources and funding is currently spent on dog and cat rescue and a substantial trap/neuter/release or place program."

She cited the growing number of homeless cats and dogs in the area. Two hundred twenty-one cats and kittens have found new homes to date in 2013 and 83 TNR/ TNP's have been completed thanks to the group's work.





“However, we have over 100 animals in foster care at this time. We must hone our skills to meet the needs of our community by more effective use of social media and the Internet,” said Proffitt.

FMCA will kick-off its milestone anniversary with an initiative called, “The FMCA 40th Anniversary Challenge.” The effort will reinforce the group’s mission to make a difference in the lives of the animals in local communities and beyond.

“We want to take advantage of as many revenue generating opportunities as possible. Volunteers are establishing committees co-chaired by me and Linda McMakin to coordinate these efforts. You all will be hearing a lot more from FMCA in 2014. Please don’t get sick of receiving communication from FMCA this year. We are working to secure sponsorship and envision a matching grant program for additional funds. I am willing to seed that effort with a \$5,000 match,” said Proffitt. She shared her goal to raise \$30,000 with the lion’s share going to spay-neuter and TNR. Those funds alone would spay or neuter 300 cats and kittens.

An on-going slideshow featuring cats and dogs available for adoption captured the attention and heartstrings of guests. Polly Berteling, a member of FMCA for 20 years said, “They do good work finding homes for pets. I have two eight-year-old cats, Samson and Delilah. One was rescued from the pound and one from a pet shop. You’ve got to love cats. I can’t remember when I haven’t had a cat.”

Berteling brought her friend, Avenel resident, Sandra Maddock who had a rescue cat, Sabrina Fur, for 16 years. “It’s [animal rescue] needed in this county and in the country especially in these economic times because people are turning their animals out. It may be cliché but, we are their voice,” said Maddock.

For more information visit: www.fmca.org