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MADACC Introduces Operation Reunification



WEST MILWAUKEE – January 24th, 2023, Operation Reunification Milwaukee is a joint effort by Friends of MADACC (FOM), Lost Dogs of Wisconsin (LDOW) and Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC) to increase the number of animals that are returned to their owners when they become lost in Milwaukee County.

Thanks to relationship building and teamwork between organizations committed to the safe care and return to their family of stray animals Operation Reunification has become a reality. For 2023, this team is proud to announce the first three programs that are part of reducing shelter intake and increasing the return rate of animals to their owners:

1. Thanks to a generous grant by Friends of MADACC, MADACC was able to provide Law Enforcement Organizations in Milwaukee County with Microchip Scanners and the tools to successfully retrieve the contact information of their owners in hopes that a trip home rather than a to MADACC can be made. Residents are encouraged to visit their local Law Enforcement facility, or District, with any found dogs or cats to check if a chip can be located and the animal can be brought directly home.
2. Another generous grant from Lost Dogs of Wisconsin and community friends of Linda Mueller (in memory of Linda who was a mutual LDOW and MADACC volunteer) and Friends of MADACC will provide free microchips to all animals impounded by MADACC in hopes that they will not have to become a repeat visitor. Owners will have the option of getting the microchip implanted and registered for free at the time of reclaim. Having current visible ID tags and a microchip increases the quick, and impound-free, return of animals to their owners.

3. Lastly, shelter intake continues to rise for cats and for dogs over 40lbs. These are two shelter populations that are harder to place than small dogs, kittens and puppies and cause shelter overcrowding. In 2023, all animals impounded and reclaimed from MADACC will be offered VIP spay and neuter pricing. Thanks to Friends of MADACC, owners of impounded cats will be able to book a spay or neuter surgery for \$38 and owners of impounded dogs will be able to pay \$63 for their pets to be sterilized. If they cannot book at the time of reclaim, they will have a 30-day window post-reclaim to book that appointment.

“In Milwaukee County, many residents are not aware that the only place that stray animals may and should be taken to is MADACC. No other organization can legally do a stray hold, and no organization or private citizen can serve as a legal stray hold facility in any municipality in Milwaukee County. MADACC is the central location for all municipalities to safely hold strays and allow their owners to find them,” said Karen Sparapani, executive director at MADACC. “When possible, out in the field, if an animal is wearing an ID or has a microchip with current information, we will return them right to their home without costly impound and stress for your pet. We are so hopeful that this phase I of our program will blossom into many more programs to help all our residents and the pets they love remain an intact family.”

“Currently, MADACC’s annual average for feline return to owner, which is on-par with national averages, is 6.5% and for dogs the annual average at MADACC is 35%. We honestly feel with education and cooperation we can do so much better for the animals and residents of our community. This is a dream team of organizations committed to getting pets back home to families that they already love and who love them right back,” adds Ms. Sparapani.

The entire Operation Reunification team will also be working on off-site microchip clinics, educating owners on preventing the loss of their animal as well as how important visible ID tags and microchips are with current and accurate information are. Owners need to have current photos and proof of ownership for their animals. Many highly valuable breeds come in and multiple individuals attempt to reclaim which is why it is important to be able to prove that an animal is yours. Those items can include vet records, proof of purchase, licensing, multiple photos and keeping that information in a safe place that you can grab if you need to prove an animal is yours over the claim of another.

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About Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC):

MADACC rescues and assures safe, temporary shelter, veterinary and humane care for over 10,000 stray, unwanted, abandoned, mistreated and injured animals each year — more than any other animal care and control shelter in Wisconsin. MADACC provides a central location for owners to find and recover their lost pets, rescues strays and removes dangerous animals from public areas, providing effective animal control services by active enforcement of Wisconsin State Statutes pertaining to animal welfare.

About Friends of MADACC (FoM):

Friends of MADACC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting community awareness and improving the welfare of the domestic animals of Milwaukee County.

About Lost Dogs of Wisconsin (LDOW):

Lost dogs of Wisconsin is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is To educate and empower owners with resources and tools to assist them in locating their lost dogs, provide finders of lost dogs with resources to facilitate more reunions with owners, reduce the number of “strays” in shelters and animal control facilities, and educate the public on keeping their dogs safe.