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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friends of the Shelter Awarded PetSmart Charities Grant

COLUMBUS, Ohio – *Friends of the Shelter*, an all-volunteer, 501c3 non-profit group, has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from PetSmart Charities to fund *The Fix*, an innovative spay and neuter program provided as a service through the Franklin County Dog Shelter (FCDS).

Despite the Shelter's policy of responsibility to alter all dogs it places prior to adoption, overpopulation in Franklin County – and beyond – remains an issue.

Enter *The Fix*, which makes available low- to no-cost spay/neuter services for qualified low-income residents coming to the shelter to reclaim their misplaced dogs.

“*The Fix* is the only program of its kind in Central Ohio,” said *Friends of the Shelter* Director Ellen Mrochek. “We have the unique opportunity to intervene when our most critical target cases – stray, unaltered dogs – have been picked up by our animal control officers.

“When the owners come to the Shelter to reclaim their pets, our Shelter staff can talk with them about options to keeping their pets safer and healthier through having them spayed or neutered.”

With the owner's permission, a veterinarian within the FCDS network will perform the surgery, in exchange for whatever donation the pet parent can offer.

Sometimes dog owners offer \$5, and other times they can afford \$20, according to Mrochek. Each procedure actually costs \$70. Funds raised by FOTS make up the difference, and the group feels it's a valid expense.

“We're preventing litters of unwanted dogs and puppies in Central Ohio that may very well end up in our Shelter looking for permanent homes in a few weeks or months,” she said. “*The Fix* helps us combat those statistics, and this generous grant from PetSmart Charities will enable us to continue offering this critical service.”

In 2006, the shelter spayed/neutered more than 400 dogs through this community outreach program.

The Fix is just one such FOTS-funded service. This and other medical programs and services of the FCDS that directly aid shelter dogs are not funded by local tax dollars, but instead remain financially dependent on FOTS and the generous support of individuals and corporations like PetSmart Charities.

About PetSmart Charities

Since its inception in 1994, PetSmart Charities (PCI) has helped save the lives of more than 3 million homeless pets, and has funded more than \$52 million to animal welfare programs across the United States and Canada. PCI works to improve the quality of lives for companion animals by creating and supporting programs that save the lives of homeless pets, facilitating adoptions through in-store programs, raising



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awareness of companion animal welfare issues, and promoting healthy relationships between people and pets. To learn more about how PCI is working to help find a lifelong, loving home for every pet, visit www.PetSmartcharities.org or call 1-800-423-PETS.

About the Franklin County Dog Shelter & Friends of the Shelter

The mission of the Franklin County Dog Shelter is to provide compassionate care for impounded animals and responsible enforcement of canine laws, thereby creating a safer and more desirable community for the citizens of Franklin County. The shelter is sustained strictly by adoption and redemption fees, and the generosity of animal-friendly individuals and businesses.

Friends of the Shelter is a 501c3 non-profit group established to coordinate the fundraising activities that directly benefit the dogs of the Franklin County Dog Shelter. Money raised by *Friends of the Shelter* is allocated to fund diagnostic services, medical/surgical care, behavioral services and training, dental, grooming, and enrichment activities that directly benefit the dogs of the Franklin County Dog Shelter. In addition, *Friends of the Shelter* funds an innovative, low-cost community outreach spay and neuter program, called *The Fix*. For more information on The Fix, call (614) 462-5581.

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