

Golf tournament raises funds and awareness for unwanted pets

By Sarah Ferguson

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It was a day dedicated to putting for the mutts and caddying for the kitties at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club this past Sunday.

The first annual "LetPets Live" golf tournament raised between \$18,000 to \$20,000 to be donated to support low cost spay and neuter clinics in the Niagara Region. The final tally is still being counted, says Ria Rosenberg, event organizer.

LetPets Live, a charitable fund set up within the Niagara Community Foundation to raise support for helping low income pet owners with veterinary care, pet rescue and adoption programs, assisting safe havens and sanctuaries for lost and orphaned pets and ensuring the compassionate and humane treatment of all animals.

The activist who has a passion for animals says there are many unwanted and neglected for cats and dogs in the region that often end up in shelters.

Rosenberg says having an animal spayed or neutered helps prevent overpopulation and it limits the number of suffering animals who end up in shelters.

The event was an effort to create awareness of how many animals are not being taken care of—cats and dogs.

Creating an awareness for unwanted or abandoned animals is something which Rosenberg, says keeps her focused on helping those animals.

"Cats and dogs can be our best friends and there are so many less fortunate animals who are not taken care of."

The animal lover uses the overpopulation of cats as an example of what the charitable fund is trying to avoid.

She says there are lots of cats breeding uncontrollably and these animals often end in the streets if they don't end up in a shelter. "Having the family cat, or strays on the streets fixed would help to control the pet population and reduce the kill rate in shelters."

She adds the situation is similar for dogs and many of these animals end up needlessly euthanized. "We're here in support of both cats and dogs and this event was the first step to help the growing situation of animal over-population."

Rosenberg says the golf tournament was a success and she hopes it will continue every year after.

The day included an 18-hole golf tournament, dinner, drinks, a silent auction and a live auction.

And with no shortage of thank you's to give, Rosenberg says she would like to recognize Chris Yakymishen and a committee of eight "wonderful ladies" who helped to organize the event.

"We are just totally overwhelmed how generous people have been. It's incredible the huge amount of support we have received. It's something we look forward to doing again next year."