

Campaign Report Edinburg Dec 2019, January 2020



At the end of 2019, and the beginning of 2020, Animal Balance, supported by a grant from Best Friends Animal Society, made possible by Maddie's® Shelter Embed Project in the Rio Grande Valley, returned once again to South Texas to hold two more MASH style, high volume spay/neuter clinics to assist shelters in the Rio Grande Valley. This campaign is part of the AB USA program. Together with staff and volunteers at Palm Valley Animal Society: Trenton Center and Palm Valley Animal Society: Laurie P. Andrews PAWS Shelter, and the Harlingen Humane Society, the team sterilized 169 cats and dogs in December and another 131 in January.

The animals were all being held in care at one of the PVAS facilities or the Harlingen Humane Society, which transports animals from their facility to Edinburg for surgery. The combined annual intake of the PVAS

shelters is more than 30,000 animals per year. The percentage of live outcomes from the shelters has increased from 54.2% in 2018, to 72% in 2019. In January 2020, PVAS announced that they reached a 90% save rate for the first time, officially obtaining "no-kill" status. Animal Balance is thrilled to be able to provide services that help facilitate this increase. Animals that are sterilized are able to be adopted more quickly, and are more likely to have adoption interest than unsterilized animals.

This project began in August of 2019, as the pilot program for AB USA. Since then, more than 1,300 cats and dogs have been sterilized in these shelters, which are all part of the Best Friends Animal Society Shelter Embed Program, supported by Maddie's Fund.

Overall, spay/neuter surgery increased by a massive 316% from 2018 to 2019, from 1,596 to 6,644 surgeries. PVAS also increased spay/neuter for return to field from 0 in 2018 to 1,500 in 2019, an amazing turnaround for community cats in the area. Animal Balance is extremely proud to



be part of this increase in numbers at PVAS and we hope that this program can serve as a model for other shelters in need in the RGV.

Both the December and January campaigns saw several return volunteers, as well as new volunteers from the local community and across the country. We were particularly excited to include students from the Donna ISD Vet Tech Program, which gives high school students an opportunity to gain hands on experience in the field ([Donna ISD Vet Tech Program](#) .)



The students assisted in recovery and got to observe and learn many skills in all facets of the clinic.

Clinics were once again held at the LPA: PAWS Shelter clinic and Trenton Rd. facility, both located in Edinburg, where Animal Balance has been able to set up a “semi-permanent” clinic using equipment purchased by BFAS and borrowed from the Harlingen Animal Shelter, who relinquished the lease on their clinic building late last year. The “semi-permanent” clinic has the capacity to accommodate three surgery tables and recovery is set up in the adjoining laundry warehouse.

This program continues to be made possible through the collaboration of all organizations involved. It is a testament to what can be accomplished when groups combine resources to better serve the animals.

Animal Balance is thrilled to be able to play a role in improving the outcomes for shelter animals in the Rio Grande Valley. Engagement on the part of our volunteers continues to grow, with many making return trips from across the country to assist with the clinics. Being able to observe an immediate impact on the animals we are serving provides some critical re-invigoration to our

volunteers, many of whom hold other jobs in rescue, disaster response, or shelter medicine. Feedback from our team continues to highlight the connection that they are developing towards the community in Edinburg, and indicates a desire to continue this work in the RGV and elsewhere where they might see a similar impact on shelter outcomes. Many of our volunteers travel from the northeastern part of the country, and were unfamiliar with the plight of shelters in the southern states. By including volunteers from these areas, we are able to continue to build on the network of resources that exists to save lives across the country and share them to save lives in areas of highest need. Additionally, we hear from our more locally based volunteers that they are excited to have an opportunity to make an impact close to home. Overall, Animal Balance continues to be very pleased with the progress of our pilot AB USA program and anticipates continued growth and success in 2020.