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## Humane Group Earmarks Funds To Help Animals Addressing cruelty, hoarding, abandonment.

By Sharon Allen Gilder

The sylvan acres of TPC at Avenel played host to the fall fundraiser luncheon held by Friends of Montgomery County Animals on Nov. 9. One hundred women and men gathered to lend support to the humane organization established in 1974 by Sue Ewald. In the early '70s, Ewald was president of the Montgomery County Humane Society and ran the county shelter. She quit to act on an idea she said was "in my heart only." She said, "That's why I started Friends. We needed money for humane education. I was so sad. Montgomery County was a big kill shelter — it still is I'm sure because there are too many animals [without homes] we all know. It grieves me."

Ewald's vision spawned the group that today comprises over 300 members and a bevy of volunteers who run cat adoption clinics at Germantown's PetSmart, manage a successful TNR (trap/neuter/release/place) program, financially assist the efforts of other humane organizations, and organize events to educate the public and raise much needed funds.



From left: Friends of Montgomery County Animals vicepresident Janet Lamkin, Avenel member Livi Henderson, president Claire Proffitt and Treasurer Winnie Reed.

FMCA president Claire Proffitt, a longtime Potomac resident and member since 1977, summarized the group's work in 2011. To date, 56 TNR's have been completed, 146 cats and kittens have found their "forever homes," and fixed income owners have been assisted with extraordinary veterinary bills to allow them to keep their pets. "One of FMCA's unique purposes is helping other humane groups with financial emergencies. A majority of FMCA's funds have been earmarked for animal cruelty, abandonment and hoarding," Proffitt said.

Creatures great and small have benefited from FMCA's assistance this year. Days End Farm received \$9,000 to coordinate the rehabilitation and placement of over 100 emaciated and sick Arabian horses seized in eastern Maryland. Ricky's Refuge, a Virginia sanctuary, received \$1,000 for legal fees in its battle to prevent logging in adjacent woodlands critical for indigenous wildlife. A grizzly hoarder case in Frederick County involving the seizure of 95 dogs, mostly Chihuahua-terrier mixes, and seven birds, prompted FMCA to donate \$1,800 to efforts coordinated by the Animal Welfare League of Frederick County to aid the groups involved in the rescue including the League, Phoenix Landing, HART (Homeless Animals Rescue Team), Howard County Animal Control and Frederick County Animal Control.

Longtime volunteer, Leigh Hughes made it possible for one of three FMCA rescue cats to be part of Animal Planet's "Must Love Cats" program filmed at the Capital Cat Club Fanciers Show on Nov. 13 at the fairgrounds in Gaithersburg. Opie, a male calico, Charlie, a domestic shorthair orange and white tabby, and Tasker, a Havana brown mix were the contenders for the coveted role. Hughes coordinates a booth for rescues at the cat shows. She said, "It gives us another avenue for placing cats for someone who may not go to our adoptions at PetSmart."

Cissy Grant worked The Surrey Two's boutique that has been an annual staple at the FMCA event. "It always make you feel so good to know you're helping needy animals," Grant said.

Ewald's words summarized the sentiments of many in attendance, "I love people too, but animals are so special." For more information visit: <http://www.friendsofmontgomerycountyanimals.org>.