

Search Best Friends

Home

► Giving to Best Friends

Partners and Affiliates

▼ Best Friends Network

Network Home

Members

Communities

Campaigns

Forums

Blogs

Resources

Volunteer

Best Vets

Invite Friends!

Help

Feedback

► Best Friends News

► At the Sanctuary

► Adoptable Pets

► Best Friends Outreach

► You and Your Pets

► About Best Friends

► Best Friends Magazine

No More
Homeless Pets
National
Conference



REGISTER ONLINE



was the site of homeless dogs everywhere.

“Wherever we went, the cities and villages, there were homeless puppies and dogs,” Janes said. “It is not that the people don’t care, but that the animals are misunderstood. They are seen as something different from the pets that people have and love.”

Janes returned home to California where she and her husband Rory live on eight acres in a valley east of San Francisco. She brought with her a paralyzed Romanian street dog that had been hit by a car. Janes named her Anna Marie. Even though Anna Marie had a rough start, Janes could see that she was a loving and sweet dog that just needed a second chance. Janes had Anna Marie fitted with a wheel cart so that she could get around. Then she went to work on how to help the rest.

Janes’ first focus was the city of Galati, Romania. Galati has a population of 330,000 people with an estimated 16,000 street dogs. Janes and her husband Rory helped local animal rescue groups build a much-needed shelter to serve as an alternative to the overcrowded and underfunded municipal shelters. They took working vacations to Romania. They provided business expertise and financial support - even remortgaging their house.

In 2003, Janes officially started her charity, Romania Animal Rescue (RAR), as a registered Romanian nonprofit. Her plan was to help more dogs, humanely control the population and build a base of support to sustain her goals.

Spay and neuter catching on

One of the goals of RAR was to humanely control the street dog population with a trap- neuter-return program. This would not only prevent the birth of more puppies, but also start to alleviate some of the cost incurred by the private shelters and the citizens. However, there was a roadblock. Local vets, primarily trained in agriculture at the country’s four veterinary schools, knew little of pet sterilization procedures. So Janes started an international veterinary exchange by recruiting six American vets to train their Romanian counterparts in properly spaying and neutering a high volume of dogs. Today, 22 Romanian vets and veterinary students have been through the program. And to date, RAR has sterilized over 5,400 street dogs.

One of the six American veterinarians, Jeanne Olson, DVM, traveled from Alaska to help RAR. Dr. Olson has been to Romania twice to teach spay and neuter techniques to Romanian vets and has worked under diverse and less than ideal conditions to get as many dogs sterilized as possible.

“In Romania, “ she says, “it’s as if Hurricane Katrina struck every day.”

Pretty soon, Janes decided that it was time to take the show on the road. She got an old travel trailer, or what Europeans call a “caravan,” and launched a mobile spay and neuter clinic. Two local veterinarians, brothers, came on board to drive the spay and neuter caravan into villages that were without veterinary services and to shelters needing veterinary care. Soon the villages were helping to promote the weekend “spay-a-thons” and people came from miles around with their pets. Sometimes local TV crews would come out to help spread the word.



As word of Janes’ efforts spread, so did her reputation of working closely with local officials and going through proper channels. RAR formed a relationship with a clinic in Bucharest that began offering spay and neuter at discounted prices while a vet trained by RAR in Braila, a city of about 240,000 people, also began offering discounted spay and neuter services. Spay and neuter was catching on.

An international base of support

RAR’s efforts are made possible by the Janes’ hard work and a growing donor base. Janes and her husband have raised money through golf tournaments, theater shows, and wine and appetizer events. Friends organize garage sales. Local businesses pitch in. And funding is trickling in from animal lovers in the U.S. and Canada and in Europe from Greece, Bosnia, Hungary, Austria, the

By Linda Wasche/NOOTERS CLUB – Best Friends Network Volunteer International Writer

International Friends

Romania: Californian reaches out to save Romania’s street dogs

July 3, 2009 : 12:25 PM

For Nancy Janes of northern California, what started out as a hiking trip to Romania has turned into an amazing journey offering hope to the country’s millions of homeless dogs.

It all started in 2001 when Janes and two friends visited Romania on a trip to the Carpathian Mountains. Intrigued by the region’s political past, the three women were looking forward to visiting the capital city of Bucharest and then hiking in the surrounding countryside. They had read up on the local history and culture. They researched local attractions and sites. What they were not prepared for

United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Spain.

“For the most part, these are people who have never been to Romania,” Janes said. “They are the true heroes. They just want to help these animals.”

One such hero is a man who came up to Janes on a street in Galati, Romania. Janes was holding a stray three-legged dog in her arms. The elderly man was wearing a torn ragged overcoat and approached her. He was obviously very poor, and might be looking for a handout. With his eyes on the dog, he pulled his hand out of his pocket and extended it to Janes. In it were several silver coins.



“He wanted to look out for the dog,” Janes said. “Things are starting to change. “People are beginning to recognize that the animals are living creatures that deserve their respect.”

And it sounds like Janes’ dream to earn respect for these beloved street dogs is starting to come true.

The dogs are starting to get adopted. Local residents are volunteering to help. One volunteer has started transporting Romanian street puppies to a rescue group in Germany where they are placed in loving homes. The volunteer, Livia Brenner, runs a professional photography business and is also working to “re-brand” the street dogs in an effort to pave the way for more adoptions. **(Check back to read about Brenner in another Best Friends international news story.)**

Janes, a former flight attendant and bookkeeper for her husband’s horse equipment and supply stores, has made RAR her full-time calling. In addition to Anna Marie, the Janes have adopted five more Romanian dogs. The Janes also have two American-born shelter dogs, two chickens and two horses. They are still making trips to Romania, and each time, Janes brings back more street puppies that she is putting up for adoption through several rescue groups around the San Francisco Bay area.

Funding needed to expand spay and neuter program

What is next for Janes and RAR? A new spay and neuter caravan is being organized, this time to target gas stations that often attract stray dogs looking for food and handouts. Janes also wants to launch a trap-neuter return program in Baila, Romania, where there are lots of street dogs and a large group of animal lovers who are ready to make a difference. The projects need about \$40,000 (U.S.) to get going so Janes is reaching out on Facebook and appealing to donors. A friend is helping her apply for grants.

There are an estimated 5 million dogs on the streets of Romania. While there are a growing number of animal lovers concerned about their plight, they are still for the most part a silent majority. But that is changing. As a result of the efforts of Janes, RAR, its volunteers and its supporters, city-by-city, village-by-village, they are seeing it happen - the changing mindset; the hand reaching out to help. “We have proven that yes we can. We are trying to make it a sign of character to love an animal,” Janes said. “That it is an honorable cause.”



Photo provided by RAR.

How you can help

For more information about Romania Animal Rescue (RAR), www.romaniaanimalrescue.com.

Photo credits: Rory and Nancy Janes on the road with Anna Marie.

Photo provided by RAR.

Local supporter standing in front of the RAR spay and neuter caravan.

Vasile Cenac, a retired engineer, feeds homeless dogs at the Galati Municipal Shelter.

Photo provided by RAR.

Jeanne Olson, DVM, one of six veterinarians training Romanian veterinarians for RAR.

Photo provided by RAR.

Posted by: Candace Ritz – International Team Leader