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**Bastrop County Animal Shelter Helpers launches spay/neuter subsidy program for pets of low-income Bastrop County residents**

**BASTROP, TEXAS, May 19, 2020** – The number of animals admitted to animal shelters is overwhelming, especially for rural counties with limited animal services budgets. Bastrop County Animal Shelter Helpers (BCAS Helpers) and its supporters are stepping up to make a big impact on the primary source of this problem: animal overpopulation due to unwanted breeding. The Spay/Neuter Certificate Program will heavily subsidize the cost of surgery from local discount veterinary services providers Save An Angel and Emancipet.

After a trial program earlier this year, the 501-c-3 nonprofit BCAS Helpers is launching a permanent program to provide low-income residents with certificates for spay/neuter surgery for their pets. With funding obtained from the Nicholas J. Juried Foundation, the O’Connor-Hewitt Foundation, and individual donations, BCAS Helpers anticipates providing over 185 spay/neuter surgery certificates this year.

“We are thrilled to be able to provide this critical service for pet owners who cannot afford surgery costs – thus keeping unwanted animals out of the county shelter,” said BCAS Helpers president Jenni Ritchie. “Bastrop County’s per capita income is substantially lower than that of surrounding counties, yet the cost of pet care is the same. In the next year, thanks to this program, thousands of unwanted puppies and kittens will never need shelter.”

Applications for the program are now available on BCAS Helpers’ website, <https://www.bcashelpers.org>.

“During the current pandemic, BCAS Helpers is also supporting essential workers by prioritizing applications for their pets,” Erika McDonald, vice president of BCAS Helpers, said. “More funding for this program and our other life-saving programs is always welcome, and 100% of your donation goes to help animals.”

BCAS Helpers also provides funding to help animals with emergency medical needs who are admitted to the shelter, and for transportation of shelter animals to other rescue organizations with more resources and potential adopters.

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*About Bastrop County Animal Shelter Helpers*

An all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization, Bastrop County Animal Shelter Helpers was established to improve the lives of dogs and cats in Bastrop County, Texas, through partnerships with the Bastrop County Animal Shelter and other charity partners. Its multi-faceted strategy involves keeping animals out of the shelter through education and spay/neuter programs, as well as helping the shelter to improve conditions for animals in their care. To learn more, visit <https://www.bcashelpers.com>.