

Featured On This Week's Program

Animal Radio for February 3, 2018

Teaching Kids About Spay & Neuter (Speuter)

Lynn Jackson, REASON

Lynn Jackson is at the forefront of educating students in Burke County, North Carolina about the acute feral cat and sterilization problems faced by this part of the U.S. She visits with fourth graders and teaches responsible pet ownership.



Lynn Jackson, secretary for REASON (Reduce Euthanasia and Spay or Neuter) explains that they have a big feral cat and roaming dog problem in Burke County, North Carolina. These animals are not spayed or neutered and have no identification on them. Lynn explains that it is a huge problem, especially in the mountains and that it's more of a cultural issue there and lack of education.

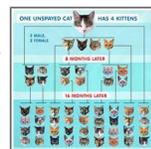
The goal of REASON is educate people on the importance of spaying and neutering their pets. They have started a new program called PREP (Pet Responsibility Education Program), which will be targeting 4th grade students in the elementary public schools.

Lynn explains that they are always working on trying to educate the adults, but unfortunately most adults already have formed opinions and don't change their ways. So after Lynn bumped her head a few times, she decided to circumvent that to reach the kids in their formidable years.

They decided to work with fourth grade students, who are around 9 to 10 years of age. At this age, they're very receptive to learning and carrying out the things that they learn. Lynn doesn't want to have kids any younger than this go through the program, because they talk about things like euthanasia, which can be a little too harsh for the younger ones. It's too hard to explain to them that over 3,000 animals are killed every year. Even with the fourth graders, she has to dance around that a little bit, depending on what the classroom looks like.

It was a little bit of work, but she was able to get this program into the public school system this past fall and it has been a huge success.

The program consists of basically six 45-minute lessons on how these children can be a responsible pet owner. It's also how they can help stop the over population of pets in their county. Burke County put down over 3,500 animals last year. They teach the children how they can make sure that their pet is healthy and taken care of. They also teach them how they can be safe around dogs and cats when they come across them roaming around and who to call in these situations. In addition, they teach them how they can make a responsible decision about providing for a pet its entire life. The program also teaches them how they can be advocates for animals and speak up for them.



One main part of the class is having the students write a "Speuter" story as part of a friendly competition. Speuter is a word made up of the two words spay and neuter. The kids like this and have fun with it. They also like the word multipli-'cat'-tion, because female cats can multiply like crazy when they are not spayed. Lynn also asks students to explain why spaying and neutering is important in their story.

Lynn explains that the kids aren't really vocal at first. However, by the end they're hugging her and they're in love with her and she's in love with them. It breaks her heart when she has to leave. But there are a few that speak out and say that their daddy won't let them do that, or it's just a dog. However, you do get the kids that go home and come back saying that they told their mom and dad, or grandma and grandpa, and they're going to go out and buy a leash and they're going to go get their dog chipped or even spayed or neutered.

So it kind of works in both ways, according to Lynn, and if she reaches one kid and saves one dog or one cat, it's all worth it to her. Lynn has already been invited back to the same school to do another program and hopefully it will expand to other schools, she just needs more volunteers!

[Visit Website](#)