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## Dalluge leaves retirement to help solve growing pet overpopulation crisis

Story by AMELIA BENNER



Harlan Dalluge '58 (*shown left*) had retired after a long, successful career as a psychiatric social worker. His plans were to relax and play a lot of golf. But then he found a cause that was worth putting down his clubs for: saving some of the estimated three- to four-million unwanted dogs and cats that are euthanized in the United States every year.

In January, Dalluge became the first executive director of the Cincinnati-based United Coalition for Animals (UCAN), which encourages spay/neutering for dogs and cats in order to decrease pet overpopulation that results in 33,000 animals being euthanized, on average, in the

Cincinnati area each year. The group, which was founded in 2007, also emphasizes public education and legislation supporting spay/neuter and works with 70 animal welfare and rescue groups in the tri-state area.

UCAN's clinic, which performs 60 to 80 operations each day, recently added a second full-time surgical team. Harlan hopes to soon add a third set of equipment and staff to help reach his goal of performing at least 10,000 surgeries in 2009, which he says will prevent the births of over 100,000 kittens and puppies for whom there are too few homes and very little help for survival.

Harlan points out that, even for non-pet owners, there are strong incentives for addressing pet overpopulation, not the least of which is economic. "We spend almost \$6 million a year to feed, shelter and eventually euthanize Greater Cincinnati's unwanted animals. So in this instance, doing nothing to address the problem of pet overpopulation costs more than doing something by supporting effective spay/neuter," he says.

Harlan had retired "to play golf" in the Palm Spring, Calif., area, but he and wife Jeannine decided to relocate to northern Kentucky to be nearer to their children and grandchildren. Soon, Harlan says, he was "bored out of his putter" and answered UCAN's ad for an executive director.

His background in social work helped him in his new position. “Non-profits have a lot in common regardless of the focus,” he says. “It’s been great fun establishing this new program.”

He also credits his Illinois Wesleyan education with inspiring him to help others. During his years at Wesleyan, he worked at the nearby Illinois Soldier’s and Sailor’s Children’s School and “got to know 300 troubled kids personally,” he says, adding that he “saw lots of ways to provide better services” for the residents there. As a non-profit administrator, he founded several children’s homes and residential treatment centers, including one of the first therapeutic foster home programs in the nation. This program was recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services, and Harlan traveled to cities across the country to help those interested in establishing similar homes.

“Basically, I have lots of fun establishing programs for needy kids, animals or whoever,” he says.

Harlan and Jeannine have often helped find homes for rescued animals. “We work closely with so many animal welfare groups and see beautiful dogs and cats on the brink of being euthanized,” he says. “So we pull them out of the shelter and work hard to find a place for them.”

As for that ultimate pet-lovers question — are you a dog or cat person? — Harlan reveals that he has two “miniature wiener (dachshunds) mutts,” and is, in fact, allergic to cats. “What can be better than being director of an animal program and being allergic to cats?” he asks with a chuckle.