A CHICAGO neighborhood where pets are plentiful but vets rare, a resident brings his cat to an HSUS event offering free vaccinations and appointments to have pets spayed or neutered at no charge. Showing compassion for the people and pets who need it most, the Pets for Life program vaccinated 596 dogs and cats that day and signed up more than 200 people to get their pets sterilized. Later, staff followed up with every attendee to offer services and reinforce the spay/neuter message.

In Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta and Los Angeles, Pets for Life helped owners with limited resources do their part to shrink the homeless pet population, and staff mentored 10 other communities in implementing the program. Nearly 14,000 cats and dogs were spayed or neutered, and more than 22,000 animals received wellness care, food, supplies and training.

For animals in need of a home, The HSUS’s Shelter Pet Project reminds the public that lovable companions wait for them at their local shelter. In 2013, Natalie Morales, anchor of NBC’s Today show, and her adopted shelter dog, Zara, joined The HSUS, Maddie’s Fund and the Ad Council to create a public service announcement in which Zara slyly discloses what she has learned about her new human since coming to live with her. Another series of YouTube videos promoting shelter adoptions launched in 2013. One features David Letterman’s bandleader, Paul Shaffer, and his family—four of whom are dogs. “Everybody should have a shelter dog,” Shaffer says. “It’s good for the soul.”

REACHING STREET DOGS ACROSS THE GLOBE

A N OUTSTRETCHED HAND, kind words and offers of treats draw a street dog in the Indian city of Jamshedpur toward an animal welfare officer: Soon the Humane Society International staffer will pick up the animal like a pet and bring her to a clinic for spaying. This revolutionary approach (usually animals are caught in nets) keeps dogs calm and demonstrates to passersby that they are not dirty and dangerous—worthy of kicks and stones—but potential friends. “I want people to see dogs in a completely different way,” says HSI’s Joy Lee. Around the world efforts like this are changing people’s minds and behavior. In Mauritius, the government agreed to stop catching and killing strays so that HSI could conduct a scientific count in the hope of spaying and neutering to lower their numbers.

In the U.S., grants to shelters and lobbying by The HSUS are helping to end the use of carbon monoxide for euthanizing homeless dogs. In 2013, individual cities in Kansas and North Carolina stopped gassing dogs, Texas banned the practice and the last known gas chambers in Mississippi and South Carolina were shut down.

70,000+

Street dogs, cats, equines and farm animals provided medical care and other assistance by HSI in 2013