



STEVEN J. SERIO

THE BUSINESS OF LIFE

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Dog diva

Mary Cameron Frey prepares to face her toughest audience yet—250 pets that'll join Paws Chicago founder Paula Fasseas and 500 guests for a gala fund-raiser on Saturday. **Society Page 49**



SOCIETY

Wear fur. Get sniffy. Bring your owner, too

Paws (Pets Are Worth Saving) Chicago, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1997 and is the largest no-kill shelter and humane organization in the Chicago area.



MARY CAMERON FREY

In 1998, the group opened the Paws Lincoln Park Cat Adoption Center, followed in 2000 by the Lurie Family Spay/Neuter Clinic on West 26th Street. Construction is under way on the Adoption & Humane

Center that will open in June 2007 on Clybourn Avenue. Paula Fasseas, vice-chairman of Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., is founder and chairman; its fifth Fur Ball will be Saturday.

Each Monday:

Check out our photo slide shows of top galas at www.Chicago-Business.com/society.

CRAIN'S: How did the idea for Paws Chicago come about?

MS. FASSEAS: My daughter Alexis volunteered at a neighborhood animal shelter and told me that adoptable animals were being killed. She said, "If you don't get involved and do something, who will?" I rounded up a bunch of friends who were concerned about this problem and asked them to help solve it. At that time, Chicago had one of the highest killing rates in the country, some 42,000 a year. Today, that rate is down to 21,000.

Tell me more about the mission of your organization.

We are the largest provider of spay/neuter services in the United States, performing 12,000 surgeries annually, of which 75% are for pets of people on public assistance. Sterilization is available at no charge for those people's pets, and for \$40 for anyone else's. When our new Adoption & Humane Center opens next year, we expect the current volume of 1,000 adoptions a year to triple or quadruple.

The Fur Ball is a unique black-tie event.

We expect about 500 guests, most of whom will bring their dogs. We will have an equal number of volunteers so that you will be able to leave your dog with a volunteer in the spa for a massage when you want to visit the buffet or the dance floor. We are installing indoor grass for the animals, and they will have their own doggie buffet. We will be serving doggie beer, which is non-alcoholic, of course. We'll have some adorable kittens available for adoption, as well as some dogs. We expect to net \$350,000 for the cause.

Do you have a philosophy that guides your philanthropy?

Being from the business world, I

would say that I am very focused on solving problems—solving this problem of pet overpopulation in a humane way and getting our agency funded.

My husband, Peter (chairman and CEO of Metropolitan Bank), and I believe that as Americans who have been fortunate enough to be successful, we must give back.



STEPHEN J. SERIO

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Paula Fasseas, vice-chairman of Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., is chairman of Paws Chicago.

2006 Paws Chicago Fur Ball

When: 6:30 p.m. Saturday

Where: W Chicago City Center, 172 W. Adams St.

How much: \$300 per person and \$100 per pooch

Who'll be there: 500 pet lovers and approximately 250 pets—all wearing some manner of black tie

For more info: Cindy Kudart, (773) 843-4884

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