

# Thirteen Years of Affordable Spaying and Neutering in Whatcom County

BY : EMILY BISHOP

For 13 years, WeSNiP has been providing affordable spaying and neutering services to Whatcom County residents.

Spaying and neutering are important parts of pet health and ownership. According to WeSNiP's executive director, Paige Schmelzer — sometimes called “the Bob Barker of Whatcom County” (*And remember folks, always spay or neuter your pets!*) — spaying and neutering a pet extends its life and can prevent cancers, especially uterine cancers. But factors like cost, travel, and lack of transportation can prevent people from spaying and neutering their pets. WeSNiP helps to remove those barriers.

“The barrier to people getting services a lot of the time is finding a place that’s low cost, but also transport and crates and things like that,” says Schmelzer.



WeSNiP provides pet transportation from their office in Bellingham to the Northwest Organization for Animal Help (NOAH) Center, an animal adoption and spay and neuter center located in Stanwood. WeSNiP and the NOAH Center have been partners in providing affordable and accessible spaying and neutering services for eight years.

WeSNiP does all of this at a reduced cost for those who qualify. Schmelzer says that spaying a dog through WeSNiP costs around \$90 to \$120, while a cat costs around \$60. For those who cannot afford the fee, WeSNiP offers vouchers through the Alternative Human Society.

If someone is interested in using WeSNiP's services, all they have to do is call. WeSNiP will ask if you are on federal assistance, a college student, and if your cat is a kitten of a cat that has been spayed by WeSNiP. If you answer “yes” to any of those questions, then you can schedule a drop-off day for your cat to be spayed or neutered.



Pets are dropped at WeSNiP's office in the morning, taken to the NOAH Center, and are ready for pickup at the WeSNiP office at 5:00 p.m.

In April, WeSNiP neutered its 24,000th pet. On average, they can spay and neuter 25 cats a week.

Those looking to help WeSNiP have a few options. WeSNiP is always looking for volunteers, business sponsors, and donations. They accept pet food, supplies, and money. Those interested in volunteering with WeSNiP can fill out a form on the nonprofit's website. Volunteers help with loading and unloading cats on spay and neuter days, as well as facilitating cat pickup and drop-offs. Volunteers must be 18 or older, or 16 and older with a parent's permission.

Schmelzer says that WeSNiP is also hoping to do more events and fundraisers this fall.

“In October we're talking about doing an Oktoberfest, hopefully with some local breweries,” she says.

This month, to celebrate 13 years of spaying and neutering pets, WeSNiP will be doing weekly raffles. Raffle tickets are \$5 and can be purchased on their website or through Facebook.

All proceeds go to WeSNiP. 2505 Cedarwood Ave., Bellingham, 360.733.6549, [wesnip.org](http://wesnip.org)