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FOR RELEASE FEB. 24, 2009

Spades Breaking Ground on Spay Day USA: Animal Samaritans to Build a New Vet Clinic in the Desert

Thousand Palms, CA – February 17, 2009: It's been 30 years in the making. On Tuesday, February 24, National Spay Day USA, Animal Samaritans SPCA will break ground on a new veterinary clinic. The ceremony will be held at 10:00am on the Coachella Valley Animal Campus on the site of their future facility, adjacent to Riverside County Animal Services, 72-050 Petland Place.

During the past five years, Animal Samaritans has experienced an average annual growth of 14.4%, but the organization has continued to operate in the same building since in 1981. "The demand for affordable spay & neuter services keeps growing," says Executive Director Fred Saunders. "For years now we have operated at full capacity. Now more than ever we need this new facility. Our expansion will be a formidable resource in the fight to reduce the number of unwanted, neglected and euthanized animals in our community."

With financing from The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation, Animal Samaritans is positioned to build an energy efficient, 7,360 square foot veterinary clinic with state-of-the art equipment. "We are pleased to assist with the building of a much needed facility benefiting animals and people of the entire Coachella Valley," says Christopher McGuire, Vice President, The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation.

To repay the program related investment, Animal Samaritans is embarking upon a capital campaign "*Every Creature Counts*". Naming opportunities range from \$5,000 for recovery kennels to \$500,000 for the lobby, reception and scheduling areas. A tax-deductible gift of \$2 million would name the Veterinary Clinic. With 31% of the resources in-hand from past fundraising efforts, several donors have secured naming rights to rooms, including the pharmacy and lab, and dog and cat overnight areas. All donations are welcome and will be used for building construction and equipment.

Last year Animal Samaritans spayed and neutered a record 8,352 cats and dogs, and gave back more than \$97,000 in subsidized vet care to low-income pet owners and free services performed on feral cats. The new clinic will more than double Animal Samaritans' annual spay/neuter volume to 20,000 per year. Additionally, low-cost vaccinations will leap from 24,000 to 40,000 annual vaccinations. The new clinic will also increase the organization's other affordable services, which include pet microchipping, wellness exams, basic pet dental care, and other minor surgeries.

At the ground breaking, some of the organization's founding visionaries will speak briefly about Animal Samaritans' 30-year history in the Coachella Valley; light refreshments will be served, along with a ceremonial spade-in-the-dirt moment. Community animal lovers are invited to attend, and may bring their animals on a leash.

Animal Samaritans is breaking ground on National Spay Day USA to emphasize the important role their new veterinary clinic will have in working to resolve the problems of animal overpopulation and homelessness. Spay Day USA was Created by the Doris Day Animal League (DDAL) in 1995, becoming America's first and only national day of action to promote the spaying or neutering of pets when DDAL combined operations with The Humane Society of the United States in 2006.

In addition to being the only low-cost animal welfare clinic of its kind in the Coachella Valley, Animal Samaritans operates a “no kill” animal shelter out of its current facility. With the completion of its new animal vet clinic, the organization will continue to operate its shelter on Ramon Road.

Animal Samaritans SPCA, a 501 (c) non-profit organization founded in 1978, is committed to improving the lives of animals and people. As the Coachella Valley’s most comprehensive animal welfare organization, they strive to one day eliminate the needless suffering and abuse of homeless and unwanted animals. Programs and services in place to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals include prevention through humane education, low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter, low-cost vaccinations, animal sheltering and pet adoptions. In addition, more than one hundred volunteers from their Animal Assisted Therapy programs visit disabled children in special needs classrooms, nursing homes, and hospitals, while their Animal Assisted Activities teams see residents at Juvenile Hall. More information is available by calling 760-343-4908 and by visiting www.animalsamaritans.org

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