

The Journal News

Hi-Tor Animal Care hosts microchip clinic

Event kicks off capital campaign for new shelter

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RAMAPO — Several dozen dog owners brought their pets to a microchip clinic hosted by Hi-Tor Animal Care Center to coincide with the 35th anniversary celebration of its founding.

The pet owners nibbled on cakes and cookies and chatted with shelter employees as they waited their dog's turn with the veterinarian.

Among them was Ana Reyes of Garnerville who brought her 18-month-old Yorkshire terrier, Raffy.

"It was easy to come here on a Saturday," said Reyes, who brought along her daughter and grandson. "The way things are, they even take dogs away from your yard. She is precious to us."

The chip, the size of a rice grain that is embedded under the dog's skin between the shoulder blades, allows it to be tracked if it runs away or is lost. The dog's information, including the owner's contact numbers, is stored for life at a data bank.

Jessica Downing, a veterinarian at Valley Cottage Animal Hospital and Jen Byrnes, a veterinarian technician at the same facility, were implanting microchips yesterday for Hi-Tor.

"Raffy, you are the perfect patient," said Downing after the Yorkshire terrier had received the implant.

"Every cat and dog should have a microchip," she added.

The clinic started at noon and by the time it ended at 3 p.m. as many as 40 pet owners had taken advantage of the service. Each paid a \$25 fee to register with a national data bank, which will keep and maintain their records.

Vivian Kiggins, the executive director of Hi-Tor, said Saturday's open house was held to reintroduce the animal care center to the community and to announce the kick off a capital campaign for a modern animal shelter in Rockland. The current facility is old and can house 50 cats and 32 dogs.

"It is not large enough to serve the Rockland community," Kiggins said. "As the population has grown, the capacity has not."

Though there are no specific plans in place, the proposed facility will cost an estimated \$3 million. Kiggins said Hi-Tor would look for county, state and federal grants, but the bulk of the money would have to be raised from within the county.

Already the animal care center has upgraded its facility. Kiggins showed visitors the new sealed anti-skid and moisture repelling floor in the shelter as well as the new heating and air-conditioning units that have been installed.

A separate unit has been made to house the cats, she said.



Right: Sharon Needelman of New City gets a wet kiss from Mona during the open house at the Hi-Tor Animal Care Center.

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Jennifer Byrnes, left, and Dr. Jessica Downing install an identifying microchip in Roxie during an open house and microchip clinic at the Hi-Tor Animal Care Center in Ramapo on Saturday.

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Above: Downing, left, and Byrnes, work with Roxie during the microchip clinic Saturday.