

November 22, 2013

To: Ms. Maggie Killackey
From: Corinne Seilhan
Subject: Proposal of Partnership for Fundraising Activity

As part of our effort to increase awareness of our mission to shelter the cats of the greater Sacramento area until their forever homes are found, I would like to offer a recommendation on a cost-effective way to get our message out. This proposal provides a look at a partnership opportunity that expands our advertising footprint in the community, increases donation/adoption potential, and literally creates items we need.

Problem

With the declining economy, it has gotten harder to make the public aware of Animal Outreach of the Mother Lode and our mission. Besides increases in advertising costs, donations (cash and items) are falling behind the normal values seen by this time of the year. We recently expanded to a fifth shelter site and without the expected level of donations, we find ourselves short of the goods needed to provide adequate care for the cats.

Most notably, with the increase in the number of kennels we are maintaining, we are experiencing a shortage of kennel covers. Currently, we have 130 bare kennels. As temperatures continue to fall, there is an increased risk in animal illness when they are not protected from drafts, which increases our overall costs. It would be difficult to pass those increased costs to the individuals adopting the animals; it is more cost effective – and better for the cats – to prevent illness rather than treat it.

Partnership

In the past, we have asked for donations of kennel covers by posting the need and cover dimensions on our website, <http://animaloutreach.net>. Traffic to the site is minimal and dimensions alone may not be enough information for a beginning seamstress/seamster.

Partnering with an established business that offers basic sewing classes provides many benefits for Animal Outreach of the Mother Lode:

- Kennel covers – First and foremost, we get the much-needed kennel covers, made to fit our specific needs.
- Advertising – Since the classes are routine offerings, the primary burden of advertising has already been absorbed by the partner. Classes are advertised on the company website, with in-store materials such as fliers and posters, and via mass mailings to individuals that have done business with the company in the past.
- Awareness – We can provide one or more volunteers for each class to present information about Animal Outreach of the Mother Lode and answer questions.

- Donations – With a volunteer on hand, we can accept donations. It may be possible to negotiate a portion of the class price as a donation or offer a lower class price in exchange for donated items such as food and bleach.
- Adoptions – Depending on the stores' policies, it may also be possible to bring one or two cats into the classroom. I would recommend mature adults who would be less likely to "assist" the students with chasing down loose threads and notions.

Additionally, our partner would reap the following benefits:

- Tax write-off – Since Animal Outreach of the Mother Lode is a non-profit 501-(c)3 organization, any contributions from the partner may be eligible for being written-off.
- Increased advertising – On average, we hold adoption clinics at nearly a dozen locations each month. We can provide fliers and word-of-mouth advertising for the sewing event.
- Increased foot traffic and class participation – The classes run even if there is only one participant; it benefits the business to have a full class. It should be easier to fill a class with the increased awareness generated from our adoption clinics. Additionally, each person that enters the store is likely to make a purchase to continue using the skills they have learned.
- Stock clearing – As discussed later in this proposal, making kennel covers presents an opportunity to clear unwanted and unpopular stock that would normally be marked down to or below wholesale price.

Selection Process

In the greater Sacramento area, there are three major companies that cater to the crafting enthusiast: Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores, Meissner, and Michaels.

Using the criteria of location, store hours, instructor availability, class pricing, and material cost, I evaluated each company. Overall, Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores proved to be the most accessible as can be seen in Table 1 on page 3.

While the Rancho Cordova location of the Michaels is very favorable (it is directly across the street from our Rancho Cordova adoption clinic), the lack of materials and instructors negates that benefit.

Meissner is considered to be a high-end sewing shop, focusing on sales of sewing machines for industrial use and serious hobbyists. Their price per class is the lowest, but requires a four-week commitment. The fabric selection is adequate but is generally 20% higher in cost than other sources. Meissner has three locations in the Sacramento area, but they are in remote areas bordering on industrial lots.

Boasting four locations, all within well-traveled retail areas, Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft hosts regular beginning sewing classes with professional instructors. The classes alternate between weekend and evening availability and are under three hours, which should not pose a barrier to entry for busy individuals. The base material cost is lower and there are frequent specials that further reduce the price; the variety of available fabrics is also more appealing to a wider range of customers. Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft also has a history of charitable community involvement. The company announced their corporate giving program surpassed \$5 million in 2012 ("Jo-Ann Fabric," 2013).

Criteria	Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft	Meissner	Michaels
Locations	4 total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk Grove Citrus Heights Roseville Folsom 	3 total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacramento Rocklin Folsom 	3 total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacramento (2 locations) Rancho Cordova
Store hours	Open 7 days a week; minimum availability of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Open 6 days a week, minimum availability of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Open 7 days a week; minimum availability of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Instructor availability	Instructors are provided; classes are offered evenings and weekends	Instructors are provided; classes are held week days	Instructors are not provided, class can be scheduled during regular operating hours
Class pricing	\$50/2.5 hour session	\$60/4-week program	\$20/hour
Material cost (lowest price per yard for cotton or cotton flannel)	\$4.79	\$5.99	N/A – Michaels does not stock fabric
Website	http://www.joann.com	http://www.meissnersewing.com	http://www.michaels.com/

Table 1: Criteria Grid

Construction

Our kennel covers use a straight-forward design of four sides, leaving the front and bottom open for monitoring and cleaning. In a classroom setting, constructing a cover allows for instruction of reading a basic pattern; selecting, measuring, and cutting fabric; basic sewing machine usage including bobbin winding, thread tension, a standard straight stitch, and a finished edge. The instruction can be expanded to include different stitch types as well as applique and other decorative embellishments.

To complete all 130 kennel covers, it would take approximately 466 yards of fabric (406 yards at a width of 36 inches and 60 yards at a width of 45 inches). The kennel dimensions and fabric requirements are listed below.

Width (inches)	Height (inches)	Depth (inches)	Number Needed	Yardage Per (36" width)	Total Yardage
36	27	25	30	2.50	75
42	31	28	40	3.00	120
56	65	32	15	5.25	79
37	54	31	15	4.25	64
31	54	37	15	4.00*	60*
56	53	31	15	4.50	68

Table 2: Kennel Dimensions and Fabric Requirements

*Due to the depth of this kennel, yardage for these covers needs to be cut from a 45" bolt.

Assuming an average retail cost of \$5.00 per yard for a cotton or cotton flannel, the material cost for fabric alone would be \$2330 if we were to purchase the materials ourselves. Thread would be an additional expenditure.

With the basic sewing classes, materials for projects taught in the class are provided as part of the registration fee. If students wish to continue making covers, they are encouraged to purchase more materials from that location.

The majority of the kennels require three or fewer yards of fabric – these shorter lengths are often found as remnants (leftovers at the end of a bolt) and sold below retail cost. There is also no requirement that the four panels of the cover be made of the same design, only the same fabric type, so this represents an ideal opportunity for the business to clear out stock of remnant fabrics. Since the students will not be keeping the covers and the cats aren't picky, the opportunity expands to allow for the clearing of unpopular and discontinued designs.

If a class average of 17 students can be reached, with each student producing one cover, all 130 covers could be constructed in only eight sessions.

Research

All research for this proposal was conducted using materials available online and speaking with representatives from local stores.

Jo-Ann Fabric announces 2012 corporate giving total. (2013, March 20). *News-Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.news-herald.com/>

Next Steps

More research is needed to determine which of the four Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts locations would be the best to approach first. A successful run in one store could be expected to lead to expanding the operation to the other three locations.

With a location selected, an official PR representative of Animal Outreach of the Mother Lode will need to contact management of the location and discuss the partnership.

Call to Action

We have 130 kennels with no coverings, representing anywhere from 130 to nearly 400 animals exposed to drafts and the bustle of activity around them. I urge you to consider this low- to no-cost opportunity to build a partnership that will provide important care for the 10,000 and more animals we see each year.