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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Animal Samaritans Offers Low-Cost Vet Care in Mecca**

**Thousand Palms, CA – April 7, 2009:** Animal Samaritans SPCA will be at the Mecca Family Services and Health Clinic on Saturday, April 25, from 8am – 12pm to administer low-cost pet vaccinations and spay and neuter services for area residents. Pet owners should bring their cats in a carrier and their dogs on a leash. Bilingual staff members will be on site to assist pet owners. The Mecca Health Clinic is located at 91-726 66<sup>th</sup> avenue.

The cost to vaccinate your animals ranges between \$12 and \$17 per shot. Locals can also microchip their furry companions for just \$15. Pet owners will be seen on a first come, first served basis. Spay and neuter services will either be free for pet owners of qualifying incomes, or low-cost. Unlike pet vaccinations and microchipping, spaying and neutering involves anesthesia, surgery, and recovery. Accordingly, pet owners must call Animal Samaritans at 760-343-4271 to make a spay or neuter appointment prior to the event on April 25. Space is limited.

Animal Samaritans is providing a mobile spay and neuter vehicle for pet owners. Spay and neuter services will only be provided for pet owners who earn less than \$1,500 per month living in the communities of Mecca, Thermal, Coachella, Oasis, Salton City, or the Torres Martinez Reservation.

Since February of this year, Riverside County's mandatory spay & neuter and microchipping ordinance for areas of unincorporated Riverside County has been in effect. "The Eastern Coachella Valley has seen a tremendous growth of animal strays as a result of overpopulation," explains Fred Saunders, Executive Director of Animal Samaritans. "There are more animal bites and attacks, especially involving children, than in other parts of our Valley. The strays are subject to disease and starvation and become aggressive. Spaying and neutering is the right step to help curb this problem."

According to Saunders, Animal Samaritans expects to take a financial loss for its services in Mecca but acknowledges that it's the right thing to do for the health of these communities. In order to repeat such an event, Animal Samaritans is seeking monetary assistance from the cities being served, and from local community and business leaders.

For more information about the event, please contact Animal Samaritans at 760-343-4271.

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, low-cost dental care and pet wellness exams, microchipping, 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 visiting [www.animalsamaritans.org](http://www.animalsamaritans.org)

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