

## **Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame Archive Project**

### *Inception to Induction*

#### **Pioneers for Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)**

“ONE ADOPTION SAVES ONE LIFE – ONE SPAY/NEUTER  
SAVES THOUSANDS”

**Year of Founding:** 1975

**Issue(s) Addressed:** Animal Population, Humane Education

**Induction Category & Year:** Environment, 2008

**Founder:** Sybil Meisel

**Personal Quote from Veteran Volunteer Janet:** “Animals can’t dial 911.”

**History:** The organization chartered by New York State Pioneer for Animal Welfare Society Long Island (PAWS-LI) is based on Long Island and consists of volunteers who worked from their homes. They are a non-profit group with all proceeds going towards helping animals. Their mission involves working towards controlling the population of animals, stopping animal abuse and educating people on the duties in owning a pet. PAWS has been helping the people and animals of Long Island since 1975 and is still going strong.

In the mid 1970’s, Sybil Meisel’s pet dog went missing so she went to her local animal shelter in Nassau County hoping she would find her lost companion. During her search, she observed first-hand the sad consequences of animal overpopulation and the problems faced by shelters at the time. Though her search for her dog was unsuccessful, she did discover a passion and mission that she has sustained throughout her adult life. The animals in the shelter ranged from puppies to older dogs and many of them were scarred by animal cruelty or neglect. It was heart wrenching for her that many of these animals were left to die, so she made it her goal to try to help these animals. She started to volunteer at the shelters by helping the animals any way she could. Soon after, she started an organization called PAWS (Pioneers for Animal Welfare Society) with a small group of friends and family who also shared her love for animals.

Ms. Meisel wanted to help these animals by stopping the problem at its source. She saw that controlling the population of these animals would also help lower the amount that ended up in shelters. So PAWS’ first mission was to find veterinarians who would do free or low costs spay/neuter procedures. The group’s goal was to educate people about the benefits of neutering their pets. They also found strays that lived on the streets and gave them a home. PAWS volunteers also went looking for feral cats to TNR (Trap-Neuter-

Return) trap them because they were not covered by the law. Feral cats had to be returned where they were found because feral cats were not accepted in shelters.

To help their cause, they joined with sponsoring agencies in Nassau and Suffolk Counties and started a Meals-on-Wheels program. They went to clients' homes to help the elderly, the disabled and the financially-troubled feed their pets. They have also aimed to educate children by giving free humane education programs to schools. This has also brought in many new volunteers to help the cause.

In 2008, PAWS-LI was inducted into the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame for their selfless act in helping many people and animals of Long Island. A new director, Melissa Gillespie, an attorney, plans to take PAWS to new heights. Last year they saved over 2,000 cats that lived in the streets of Long Island and plan to reach even higher goals in the coming years.

**Agency Mission:** The Pioneers for Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) is dedicated in helping spread animal rights. They are devoted to decreasing the population of strays in Long Island by finding them homes and educating people how to take care of their pets. PAWS also provides assistance to pet owners who are in need of support.

**Population Served:** The Pioneer for Animal Welfare Society group has neutered thousands of cats and dogs of Long Island and in doing so they have helped people of all in Long Island keep their loving companions.

**Scope of Activities:** Since the founding of PAWS, they have organized many creative ideas to help reach their goals:

#### **Spay/Neuter Program**

Spay/Neuter Program is designed to curb the animal population in Long Island. These operations consists of TNR (Trap-Neuter-Rescue) for feral cats, low/free cost for pets and educating people the benefits of neutering such as reducing animal population and lowering the chances of animal diseases.

#### **Meals-on-Wheels Program**

The Meals on Wheels Program is a program that helps the elderly and disabled citizens of Long Island get food for their pets free of cost.

#### **Financial Assistance Program**

The Financial Assistance Program is formed to help the citizens of Long Island pay for surgeries, veterinarian care, and pet food.

#### **Adopt-A-Pet Day**

The Adopt -A –Pet Day program was created to promote adoption by telling people to go to local pet stores and shelters in Long Island and save an animal from being destroyed.

### **Learn Humane Education Program**

The Learn Humane Education Program is a free program designed to teach children in schools of all ages the importance of humane society. The plan is to show children the tragic experiences animals go through and how to take care of pets. They also have a hands-on experience to help save pets.

**Volunteer Involvement:** Pioneers for Animal Welfare Society welcomes everyone from all ages to join the organization. Participants can help one or as many days they would like. Veteran volunteer Janet says “Save a life, make a difference.” PAWS stresses that even if you don’t volunteer, please spread the word about animal rights and tell your friends and family to spay/neuter their pets.

### **Numbers to Shelters on Long Island:**

- Babylon (631) 643-9270
- Brookhaven (631) 286-4940
- Hempstead (516) 785-5220
- Huntington (631) 754-8722
- Islip (631) 224-5660
- Oyster Bay (516) 677-5784
- Smithtown (631) 360-7575

**Funding Sources:** PAWS funds their operation through donations, street-fairs and sales of sweaters and T-shirts. All proceeds go directly to helping animals. No money is spent on salaries, rent or professional fundraising. Donations can be made by contacting PAWS (516) 364-PAWS (7297).

### **Contact Information:**

Pioneers for Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)  
P.O. Box 861  
Hicksville, NY 11802  
For More Information,  
(516)364-PAWS (7297)  
<http://www.paws-li.org>

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