



## Online shopping aids spay-neuter effort Sylvan Lake marketer creates site

BY CHERYL WOODARDS-NICHOLLS • FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER • August 3, 2008

An estimated 3 to 4 million dogs and cats are euthanized each year in the United States and of those, a quarter of a million are right here in Michigan, according to the Michigan Humane Society.

Many rescue groups have been established to address this problem and one such group, the Michigan Pug Rescue in Farmington, has formed a partnership with Bloomfield Hills-based Nooters Club to help stamp out the overpopulation of pets.

Six months ago Larry Nathan and his wife, Kathy Nathan, founders of the nonprofit Michigan Pug Rescue, met with Linda Wasche of Sylvan Lake, the founder of Nooters Club, to come up with creative ways to educate pet owners about having their animals spayed and neutered.

Now visitors to the Web site, [www.michiganpugrescue.com](http://www.michiganpugrescue.com), can scroll down on the Michigan Pug Rescue home page and click the link for the Nooters Club apparel and gifts online store. When they make a purchase, special software installed in the Nooters Club site will identify that they entered through the rescue Web site.

Through Michigan Pug Rescue's affiliation with Nooters Club, the group receives 15% of sales that originate from the rescue's site.

"I wanted to raise people's awareness of the need to have their pets spayed and neutered," said Wasche, a full-time marketing professional. "But I wanted to do it in a way that didn't make people feel sad."

What did Wasche do? She created the Nooters Club.

"Nooters Club all began as kind of a joke," Wasche said. "I was working with a local veterinarian on some marketing ideas and names for his clinic and threw out the name Nooters Club. Well, the vet didn't like it so I decided to use it ... "

Nooters Club promotes spaying and neutering across the United States through its lighthearted cartoons and sayings such as "My dog stops at heavy petting," "Prevent littering," and "My pet's a member of Nooters Club."

The slogans appear on items such as T-shirts, sleep shirts, sweatshirts, boxers and tote bags.

Wasche, 50, said she founded the Nooters Club two years ago as a for-profit platform to promote spaying and neutering through gift and apparel items that feature whimsical characters. A portion of the money raised through sales is given to rescue groups such as Michigan Pug Rescue.

The Nathans said they are excited about the joint venture with the Nooters Club.

"We share the same goals," Larry Nathan said. "We both want to help end the needless euthanization of animals and we feel that Linda can help us with that goal."

"Animal rescue organizations are always in need of funding," he said, "so we hope that lots of people will buy Nooters Club items to help support us at Michigan Pug Rescue."

Wasche said Nooters Club was not founded to compete with rescue organizations: "We just want to help them by finding ways to make money for them."

*Michigan Pug Rescue can be reached at 248-473-8389, Nooters Club at 248-253-0300.*