

Heeding the call for animals' sake

FREE CLINIC: A local veterinarian wants to help pet owners who are struggling financially.

By **KEVIN FULLER**

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On the way to work, Dr. Michelle Brownstein thought of an unusual way to help her country.

Answering President Barack Obama's call for service, Brownstein — owner of Henrietta Animal Hospital — decided to hold a free pet clinic from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, for those who have been hit hard by the economic stress.

"I was driving to work thinking what I could do for our community," said Brownstein. "I can't build things."

But she can help animals. Brownstein, a veterinarian, decided she would contact her medical supply distributors and see if they would chip in. So far, 12 out of the 13 distributors she has contacted have provided goods — every-

How the clinic works

In order to receive services from the clinic, you must fill out a registration form. Visit www.henriettahosp.com and click on the Pets in Need link. Download the registration form. The form, accompanied by a signed referral letter from an agency or clergy member, must be received by Thursday, Feb. 19. It can be faxed to (585) 321-9975, sent to Henrietta Animal Hospital, 3156 East Henrietta Road, Henrietta, NY 14467, or e-mailed to drbrownstein@henrietta-hosp.com.

thing from medicine to food. "Everybody is stepping up to the plate," said Brownstein.

The purpose of the Pets in Need Clinic is to provide basic medical services to pets whose owners have fallen on hard times because of the economy. "The pet they have had for years is their only hope," said Brownstein. "I would hate to see them have to surrender their animal."

The clinic looks to offer basic needs such as vaccinations, deworming, and possibly heartworm testing, and also will be providing limited amounts of food for those who need it. Eligibility is based on a referral system.

Brownstein has put the word out to various organizations, such as the Catholic Family Center, a family service provider in Rochester; the Open Door Mission, a home-



KEVIN FULLER/MESSENGER POST

Dr. Michelle T. Brownstein, owner of the Henrietta Animal Hospital, says she was driving down the road when she came up with the idea to host a free pet clinic.

less shelter and kitchen in Rochester; the American Red Cross; the Salvation Army; the Veterans Outreach Center in Rochester; Visiting Nurse Service in Webster; the United Way and the Jewish Family Service in Rochester.

So far, about 12 people have signed up for the clinic and 20 have volunteered.

Members of the community are already commending Brownstein for her service.

"Animals need to have the same health care as humans," said Adrienne McHargue, director of communications for Lollypop Farm animal shelter in Perinton. "If a vet clinic is

able to do something for people in need, that would be a great thing for the community."

Brownstein hopes her service can be a model other veterinarians will follow.

"We hope this is a challenge to other small businesses in Rochester," said Brownstein.

Not only does she hope other businesses follow, but Brownstein hopes people who have used her services will come back and volunteer someday.

"If we all do our part, we will get through this," said Brownstein.

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