



ATTN: 2010 Achievement Awards Program  
 Virginia Association of Counties  
 1207 East Main Street, Suite 300  
 Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

address service requested

Call for Entries



Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

Program Information

Locality Montgomery County, VA (Parks and Recreation)  
 Program Title Pool Party for Pooches  
 Program Category Parks and Recreation  
 Population Category (4) 50,001 to 100,000

Contact Information

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name F. Craig Meadows  
 Title County Administrator  
 Signature\* *F. Craig Meadows*  
 \*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

Montgomery County, Virginia

# Pool Party for Pooches

2010 VACo Achievement Awards  
Parks and Recreation (Category 7)  
Population: 50,001 to 100,000 (4)



**Pool Party for Pooches**  
**Montgomery County, Virginia**

**1. Brief overview**

Combine pooches, a pool and people and you've got an end of summer event that raises approximately \$5,000 to help the local humane society. This annual fundraising event is a public-private partnership between Montgomery County Parks and Recreation and the Humane Society of Montgomery County.

Parks and Recreation allows the Humane Society to use the County's "Frog Pond" pool for the pool party for pooches after the water park has closed to the public for the summer. The County provides the aquatics staff to ensure a safe party and markets the event through its brochure and news releases. The Humane Society also publicizes the party, organizes the event and runs it with help from volunteers from the student veterinary club at Virginia Tech. The revenue from ticket admissions and business sponsors is used to pay for animal food and adoption efforts by the Humane Society – costs that the county government might otherwise be paying for through its animal shelter operations. The partnership also fosters goodwill and cooperation that benefits both citizens and animals.

## **2. Problem/Need for the Program**

Both the Humane Society of Montgomery County (HSMC) and Montgomery County Animal Control work to prevent the suffering, neglect and abuse of animals in our community. The HSMC operates a no-kill shelter, providing a safe haven for approximately 30 dogs and 70 cats at any one time. Montgomery County operates the County Animal Shelter, which does not currently accept cats. Even with these efforts - and other groups and individuals also working to curb pet overpopulation and promote responsible ownership - the problem of stray, unwanted dogs and cats remains a problem.



The Humane Society places 400 to 500 animals into loving homes each year and provides a place to adopt furry companions at a low cost. In addition, the HSMC provides thousands of dollars worth of financial assistance to spay or neuter hundreds of animals in our community each year.

Volunteers at the HSMC bring cats or dogs to visit local schools, hospitals and nursing homes to promote humane education and the bond between people and companion animals. Speakers are available to make presentations to classrooms, community

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organizations and businesses. The group also participates in many community events and distributes educational materials.

HSMC is entirely privately funded, receiving no money from the County or other governmental institutions. Its good



works in our community significantly reduce the unwanted pet population, increase adoption rates and promotes responsible pet ownership. Since the County's animal shelter is not equipped to handle felines, the HSMC makes up for this lack of service by accepting cats into their safe haven. All of these efforts help to lessen the burden on the County's animal shelter and, in turn, taxpayers.

**3. Promoting cooperation between the County and Humane Society**

The objectives of the Pool Party for Pooches are to raise money for the Humane Society, increase public awareness of the HSMC and animal issues, and give people the opportunity to have fun with their furry friends.

There is a core group of volunteers who have been on the "dog swim" committee and stage the event each year. Planning usually begins in late spring/early summer and sponsorship request letters/packages are sent out.

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The HSMC and the County's Parks and Recreation staff collaborate on details throughout the summer. As the time gets closer to the event, flyers are posted in venues in Blacksburg and Christiansburg. A banner thanking sponsors is ordered, announcements and sponsorship "thank you notes" are prepared for the newspaper and the local press is contacted to help publicize the event.



People of all ages attend the event with their pooches. There are thirty-something's with their dedicated lifelong canine friends, as well as families with young children who have just adopted their first pup. All dogs attending the "pool party" must be on a leash and get along well with others.

Gate admission is \$10 per dog, \$5 per person or a small bag of pet food. Salon services are available for \$3. Sponsor levels include Top Dog, Best Friend, Pack Members and Littermates. Contributions are generally in the \$250 to \$500 range, although there have been a few who have donated \$1,000 to \$1,500. A Top Dog contribution results in newsletter recognition, a certificate of appreciation and a listing of the donor's name on the pool party T-shirt.

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In addition, there is face-painting and raffle prizes (usually gift certificates to local restaurants). There are also "muskrat" races each year - this is a timed race in the deep end of the pool where one dog at a time chases a lure. There are prizes for the top three winners.

Attendees don't need a dog to enjoy this event - cat-only households, or even pet-less folks are still welcome!

**4. Cost and Staffing**

The County pays two lifeguards and gate attendants to be on duty for the party and cleanup afterward at a total cost of \$300. The staff registers attendees, assists with photos, cleans the pool and deck with bleach and water, and clears the filtration system of dog hair. There are lifeguards who enjoy the event as much as the pets and vie for the opportunity to work the pool party.

**5. Program results/success**

The County's Parks and Recreation Department is open to new ideas for co-sponsoring events that benefit the community and get citizens involved in a charitable event. There are many attendees who never knew the County operated a pool in the summer until they attended the fundraiser. This makes the pool party an effective and inexpensive marketing tool to reach new audiences. The event also promotes the County's trail system

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behind the pool – many attendees return at a later date to use the trail for walking their dog.

The HSMC/County partnership raised nearly \$5,000 this past September and was attended by 215 dogs and more than 325 people. The funds raised are used to benefit homeless pets, educate people about responsible pet ownership and provide financial assistance for spaying and neutering animals. The Humane Society's efforts also play a critical role in sheltering and adopting cats, since the County shelter is not equipped to handle them.

The County believes this public/private partnership provides an endless pool of opportunities for the County and Humane Society to work together on the County's plans to build a larger animal shelter in the future that will accept more animals -- including cats -- and expand public education efforts and spay/neuter programs.