

The Paw Project

For more information, please visit www.PawProject.org



The Paw Project is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to repairing the paws of crippled declawed animals, educating the public about the cruelty of declawing and working to outlaw declaw surgeries.



photo - Bob Crownfield

Paw Repair Surgery

A young male white tiger received a last minute reprieve when his handler, a traveling circus owner, was convinced by Paw Project volunteers that the big cat's pain could be alleviated by surgical treatment. Without paw repair surgery, Angel would have been euthanized.

When Paw Project director Dr. Jennifer Conrad first examined Angel, she noticed that he had a bad limp and was putting his weight on only two paws, the front and back paws on the right side.

Dr. Kirk Wendelburg of Animal Specialty Group in Glendale, CA and Dr. Conrad repaired both of Angel's front paws and his painful back foot. The surgery cannot restore the lost claws, but the surgeons can reshape deformed bones and reattach cut tendons to make paws more functional and less painful.

Angel recovered well from his repair surgery. The Paw Project offered to find him a home in a sanctuary, but the circus owner declined the offer. Angel's plight is all too common. There are many who make their livings from animal attractions while ignoring the welfare of the animals in their care.

Angel is one of the 68 big cats whose paws have been repaired in over 170 separate surgeries since 2000, including 10 surgeries in 2008. This work has been made possible by the generous donations of Paw Project supporters. Many animals still await paw repair surgery.



photo - Willow Evans



photo - Snowden Bishop

Angel was declawed to be in a circus act. Soon thereafter his obvious lameness, caused by the declawing, resulted in his being removed from the act. Without the repair surgery, Angel would have been destroyed. (left) A breathing tube is inserted in the anesthetized tiger by Rob Patterson and Dr. Jennifer Conrad in preparation for paw repair surgery. (right) Yellow elastic tourniquets are placed on his legs to prevent bleeding.

My Vet Did What!?!: A New Documentary

What goes on behind closed doors in a veterinary hospital? Why are there often no informed consents and explanations of risks in veterinary clinics as there are in a pediatrician's office? Would people declaw their animals if they knew that declawing was amputating the last bones in cats' toes and if they knew the risks to which they were subjecting their cats?

My Vet Did What!?! is the title of a new documentary film about veterinarians and the animals they treat. Kaleo Productions will soon release this 90-minute exposé on non-therapeutic surgeries, surgeries that confer no benefit to the animal, such as declawing, tail docking, debarking, ear cropping, and bird wing pinioning. **My Vet Did What!?!** reveals the truth about some veterinarians and their motives to perform these unnecessary surgeries. The work of the Paw Project is featured in the film.

The documentary, four years in the making, features interviews with veterinarians who discuss the tragic consequences of non-therapeutic and cosmetic surgeries and the suffering inflicted upon domestic cats by "routine" declawing. The film also explores the false sense of security that declawing gives uninformed owners of big cats, such as tigers and lions. Declawed big cats have attacked, mauled, or killed over 30 people in the last five years. Most of these people were under the mistaken assumption that if a cat is declawed, it can be approached without concern. However, declawing robs a cat of its primary defense and therefore it may be more likely to bite. There is no doubt that a bite is much more dangerous than a swipe from a paw.



photo - Chantal Fur

The documentary asks many questions about other non-therapeutic surgeries, including tail docking, ear cropping, debarking, and pinioning. For example:

Would dog lovers subject newborn puppies to tail docking if they thought about what it really entailed? Tail docking, a non-therapeutic and unnecessary surgery performed on certain breeds of dogs, can lead to serious medical problems for the animal. If the tail is cut too short, the animal can become incontinent because the nerves that service the back half of the dog, including the bladder and rectum, can be damaged. Despite this far-too-common problem, many veterinarians continue to dock tails on two or three day old puppies – and without anesthesia.

What about pointy ears? Would they be important to people if they thought about how much pain it causes the dog to have its ears cut? Ear cropping is used to make a dog's ears stand up. It is very commonly performed on Doberman Pinschers and Great Danes. Veterinarians have to slice the ear flap and then bandage it in order for it to stand upright. When the surgery is unsuccessful, the dogs with botched ear jobs are often dumped in shelters because they



photo - Garth Pillsbury

don't meet the esthetic standard of the breed. Veterinarians sometimes advocate ear cropping, incorrectly claiming that the procedure allows better air flow into the ear canal, which they claim prevents ear infections. In fact, breeds that are prone to ear infections, such as Cocker Spaniels and Basset hounds, never have their ears cropped.

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photo - Brian Horan

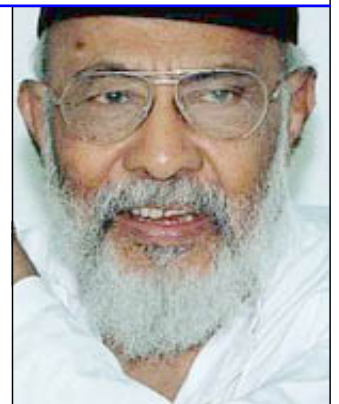
(Continued from page 2)

Would dog lovers make their dogs unable to bark if they knew the consequences? Debarking is a surgical procedure in which veterinarians cut the vocal cords of dogs so that they can no longer make loud sounds. The dangers to the dog include the potential for breathing difficulties secondary to scarring. A dog that has been silenced cannot bark for help if it is in trouble. Some animal behaviorists believe that debarked dogs may be more likely to be attacked by other dogs because they cannot bark a warning.



photo - Harriet Baker

Would bird lovers elect to have their birds made flightless if they knew the consequences? Pinioning is a surgical procedure performed on birds to make their wings useless for flight. An amputation is performed at the bird's "wrist." A modification of this procedure severs the bird's tendons in the wing so it cannot be extended for flight. Pinioning is often performed on captive birds, such as swans and flamingos, so that they cannot fly south for the winter. They also cannot escape predators. Many swans' wings are pinioned so that they must remain as ornaments in lakes and ponds.



S.M. Mohd Idris, President of Sahabat Alam Malaysia



Declawing of big cats is under scrutiny in Malaysia



The Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan), in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, is in the process of amending the current version of the Protection of Wildlife Act of 1972 to outlaw the declawing of big cats, according to Dr. Amerjit Singh, spokesperson for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

"The practice of declawing or removal of canine teeth of tigers for any other reasons except as a treatment regime is unacceptable. Perhilitan will investigate this complaint and advise the management not to practice the declawing and removal of canine teeth of tigers and other big carnivores," said Dr. Singh.

The government action was prompted by a group called Sahabat Alam Malaysia, a grassroots, non-governmental organization involved in environmental and development issues. Their findings were based largely on the research and educational efforts by the Paw Project in the United States.

S.M. Mohd Idris, President of Sahabat Alam Malaysia, spoke out against declawing in a sharply worded article, "CRUELTY TO ANIMALS: Enough of this mutilation," in the July 30, 2008 issue of the New Strait Times.

The History of the Struggle to Protect Cats from Declawing

2002 GOOD NEWS: The anti-declawing battle began in 2002 when Jean Mathison, a citizen of West Hollywood California received a call from her friend, Hernan Molina, Deputy to the Mayor of the city. Hernan had found an abandoned declawed tuxedo cat and was looking to Jean, an animal lover, for help rescuing it. Jean remembers “putting two and two together” and deciding that Hernan should meet with veterinarian, Dr. Jennifer Conrad and the caring Deputy should see the work she was doing to help the big cats that have been declawed. Soon after, Jean, Hernan, and Jennifer, joined by GG Verone, a well-known activist in the city, approached Mayor John Duran with the anti-declawing ordinance. Jim Jensvold of the Paw Project contacted UCLA Law Professor Taimie Bryant and attorneys Orly Degani and Vicki Steiner. The Paw Project’s volunteers and the attorneys wrote the ordinance defining declawing as an act of cruelty and banning all persons, not just veterinarians, from performing it.



photos - Gabrielle Saveri and Snowden Bishop

Jean Mathison (left) testifying at a West Hollywood City Council meeting in support of the declaw ban. Hernan Molina (center), deputy to Mayor John Duran, was instrumental in introducing and preparing the ordinance for the West Hollywood City Council. Dr. Jennifer Conrad (right) is founder and director of the Paw Project, the sponsor of the ordinance banning declawing in West Hollywood.

2003 GOOD NEWS: West Hollywood’s anti-declaw ordinance has overwhelming support from its citizens. At public hearings, supporters of the ban outnumber opponents 40-to-1. The Council members vote unanimously to enact the ban in April, 2003. The anti-declaw law outlaws declawing of all animals and is the first of its kind in North America.

West Hollywood Council members listen carefully to testimony regarding the proposed declawing ban before unanimously voting to support it. From left, Councilmembers Jeffrey Prang, John Duran, and Steve Martin.



photo - Gabrielle Saveri

2005 BAD NEWS: The declawing ban is challenged by the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), a veterinary trade organization that works to “enhance the business growth of the membership.” The CVMA’s lawyers sue West Hollywood to regain the right to declaw in that city. (In contrast, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons officially consider declawing to be a “mutilation.”) Despite the prospect of high legal fees, the West Hollywood City Council quickly votes to defend the city’s position. Orly Degani, an attorney with vast experience in animal welfare cases, agrees to assist West Hollywood with the defense *pro bono*. The case is heard in Superior Court, and is decided against West Hollywood in November 2005. CVMA attorney Daniel Baxter brags, “We will now take steps to ensure that the ordinance is rescinded and that the city refrains from enforcement thereof.”

VERY GOOD NEWS: Meanwhile, California enacts AB 1857, the Paw Project-sponsored bill that prohibits declawing of wild and exotic cats. The bill was introduced to the legislature by then-Assemblyman Paul Koretz.



photos - Erika Willhite and Jeff Fleiss

Mayor John Duran and Dr. Jennifer Conrad (photo left) announce in a press conference that West Hollywood will defend its ban on declawing by fighting the CVMA lawsuit that had been filed against the city. Animal advocates (right) support West Hollywood by protesting what they consider to be the anti-animal actions of the CVMA. (Continued on page 5)

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2007 GOOD NEWS: In June, the California Court of Appeal reverses the lower court ruling, rejecting the arguments of the CVMA. City Attorney Mike Jenkins and Orly Degani are the lawyers for West Hollywood. The Paw Project submits an *amicus curiae* brief in support of West Hollywood. The city of San Francisco and the Animal Legal Defense Fund also submit briefs supporting West Hollywood. Appellate Court Judge Perluss writes in the court's decision, "Echoing Gandhi's teaching that a society's moral progress is best judged by its treatment of animals, the City of West Hollywood has banned as cruel and inhumane the practice of animal declawing unless necessary for a therapeutic purpose.... West Hollywood's ordinance is not preempted by state law."

The declaw ban is reinstated.

(from left) Paw Project attorney Orly Degani, Dr. Jennifer Conrad, and Mayor John Duran at press conference following the court decision upholding the West Hollywood declaw ban.



photo - Snowden Bishop

2007 GOOD NEWS: In October, the CVMA requests a review of the appellate court decision, but the Supreme Court of California refuses to hear the case.

2008 BAD NEWS - Dirty Politics? In February, the CVMA enlists California State Assemblymember Mike Eng to introduce new legislation in a backdoor effort to circumvent the Appellate Court decision protecting a city's right to ban declawing. AB 2427, the proposed law, would prevent other California cities from following West Hollywood's lead in banning declawing or any other act of cruelty if it is performed by a licensed veterinarian. The CVMA lobbies the legislators aggressively and lavishly. According to the Secretary of State website, over \$160,000 in "contributions" have been given to California legislators prior to votes on AB 2427. In many cases, the legislators received thousands of dollars just days before committee hearings on the bill.

MORE BAD NEWS: The bill passes both houses despite being vehemently opposed by the California Animal Association (a coalition of animal welfare organizations, including the Paw Project) and two local government advocacy organizations, the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties.

2008 GOOD NEWS: The CVMA-sponsored pro-declawing bill, AB 2427, ends up on Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk in late September 2008. He receives hundreds of calls, letters, and faxes from concerned citizens begging him to veto. Members of the California Animal Association, including Barbara Schmitz, Pam Runquist, Beverlee McGrath, Curt Ransom, Nicole Paquette, Jennifer Fearing, Nicole Forsyth, and Rich McLellan – plus Virginia Handley of Animal Switchboard – work diligently to coordinate opposition to the bill.

The Governor vetoes many bills, including AB 2427, because of historic delays in passing the state budget. He writes in a chastising letter to the legislators:

"I am returning Assembly Bill 2427 without my signature.... I am only signing bills that are the highest priority for California. This bill does not meet that standard and I cannot sign it at this time."

As of January 2009, cats are protected in West Hollywood, and other cities are free to ban declawing within their borders. However, the protection is shaky as the battle to protect animals continues.

It is likely that the CVMA will attempt to reintroduce a bill similar to AB 2427 in 2009.



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoes the CVMA backed bill that would have amended California law to prohibit cities from banning declawing.

The Paw Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal welfare organization

EIN: 59-3782436 • CA Corp ID: 2604032

The Paw Project's mission is to promote the humane and ethical treatment of animals, to educate the public about the painful and crippling effects of declawing, to end the practice of declaw surgery, and to rehabilitate big cats that have been declawed.

Tax-deductible contributions to the Paw Project are used to pay for surgical facilities and supplies, educational programs, and anti-declawing efforts. Contributions may be mailed to:

Paw Project
PO Box 445
Santa Monica, CA 90406-0445

or may be made online at www.pawproject.org

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced a new regulation banning declawing and defanging of wild carnivores and primates. The USDA is the governing body over all animals that are exhibited, sold or bred. In August 2006 the USDA introduced the following guidelines (below) for all USDA licensees. USDA licenses are required for animal acts, including circuses, animal actors and sanctuaries that are open to the public. The Paw Project strongly lobbied for the regulation. The USDA was influenced by the American Veterinary Medical Association's position statement on declawing of wild and exotic cats. The AVMA's position statement came about after the publication of a scientific paper on the crippling consequences of declawing authored by Paw Project veterinarians.

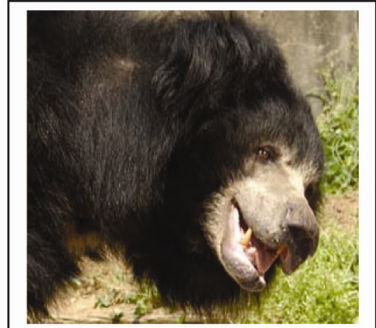
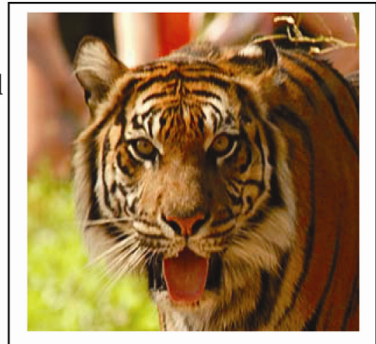


Information Sheet on Declawing and Tooth Removal

Declawing or the removal of the canine teeth (fangs) in wild or exotic carnivores or nonhuman primates is no longer considered to be appropriate veterinary care unless prescribed by the attending veterinarian for treatment of individual medical problems of the paws or teeth. These procedures are no longer considered to be acceptable when performed solely for handling or husbandry purposes since they can cause considerable pain and discomfort to the animal and may result in chronic health problems. These procedures are no longer allowed under the Animal Welfare Act. This notice is consistent with the current position statement issued by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

This applies to all regulated nonhuman primates and captive wild or exotic carnivores, including, but not limited to, big cats, canid species, and bears.

All AWA licensees must no longer routinely perform these procedures (declawing and removal of canine teeth) on their wild or exotic carnivores and nonhuman primates. Continuing to routinely use these procedures may subject the licensee to citation for noncompliance with the AWA, and may result in enforcement action. Treatment of individual animals with documented medical problems as prescribed by the attending veterinarian is not subject to these restrictions. Registrants may use such procedures only as part of a research protocol that has been reviewed and approved by the IACUC at the institution.



Landlords require declawing despite harm caused by procedure

Some landlords require cats to be declawed before a tenant can sign a lease. In other instances, tenants have faced eviction if they don't declaw their cats, even though that they have lived peacefully in the building for years. These landlords have the uninformed notion that a declawed cat will do less harm to furnishings.

However, many renters have found that declawed cats begin to avoid using their litter boxes, preferring to urinate on sofas or carpets, presumably because digging in the litter hurts their feet. In addition, many declawed cats become aggressive biters after losing their claws. When a cat doesn't have claws, it may resort to defending itself with its teeth. A cat bite is very serious and often requires antibiotics and even hospitalization. Landlords may unintentionally put tenants at risk of being bitten when they require cats to be declawed.



photo - Willow Evans

Educating landlords on the consequences of declawing, both for the cats and the property, may convince them to accept cats with intact claws.

US Rep helps to protect cats from declawing

In the summer of 2007, Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) inserted anti-declawing language in a bill that finances the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Some government bureaucrats working for HUD had been requiring tenants' cats to be declawed. This action presented a difficult dilemma for the citizens who were being given the choice to either declaw their cats or find some other place to live. The latter is an unlikely option for people who are seeking public assistance for housing.

There are already HUD regulations that specifically prohibit debarking. Kaptur's committee report stated, "Declawing is a painful procedure for pets which is almost never medically or behaviorally necessary. The Committee urges HUD to notify all Public Housing Authorities that declawing is not required in public housing under HUD policy."

Rental Pet Policy

Cats Only
Deposit \$250
Non- Refundable pet deposit per cat.
CAT MUST BE DECLAWED
No Exceptions & neutered.

(above) Ad from rental listing shows a poor understanding of both cats and grammar.

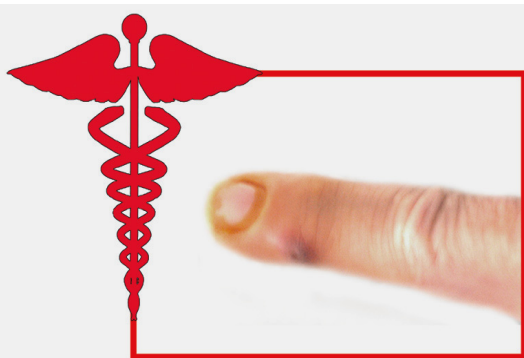


photo - Willow Evans

This cat bite on a finger required treatment with antibiotics and hospital care. Several published studies have found a greater incidence of biting by cats that have been declawed.



photo - Willow Evans

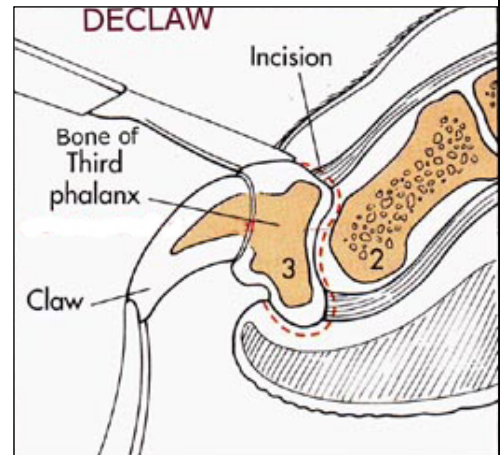
Declawed cats, such as the one in this photo, often avoid using the litter box, preferring to urinate on sofas or carpets, presumably because digging in the litter hurts their paws. This sofa has been covered in plastic to avoid further urine damage.

Declawing Fact Sheet

What is declawing?

Declawing is not merely the removal of the claws. Rather, it is a series of amputations. All or most of the last bone of each of the ten front toes is removed, and tendons, nerves, and tissues that allow for normal function of the paw are severed. An analogy in human terms would be cutting off each finger at the last joint. Declawing requires the amputation of bone because a cat's claw, unlike a human fingernail, grows directly from within the bone.

Declawing has become fairly common in the US and Canada in the past three decades. Before that time, it was rarely performed. In most countries, declawing is considered unethical and is not performed by veterinarians. Declawing is illegal in many countries, including Austria, Croatia, Malta, Israel, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey.



Declawing is a potentially risky procedure

While some cats appear to do well after declawing, the procedure subjects cats to the risks of bleeding, infection, lameness, nerve damage, gangrene, extensive tissue damage, and death. One report in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) states that 33% of cats suffer at least one behavioral problem after declaw or tendonectomy surgery. Another study reported that acute complications “develop in up to a half of (declawed) cats. Long term complications of the procedure (are) reported for about a fifth of (declawed) cats.” A third JAVMA report found 11% lameness, 17% wound breakdown, and 10% nail regrowth post-operatively in cats having declaw surgery.

Declawing is a painful procedure

Declawing is associated with “severe pain,” according to veterinary experts. The immediate pain of declawing can be treated with pain medication, but a recent survey of over 1000 veterinarians, reported in JAVMA, found that 44% administered no pain medication after declaw surgery. Studies also indicate that using a laser, rather than a scalpel or clippers, does not result in a reduction in post-operative pain. Recent studies have reported chronic pain syndromes, similar to “phantom-limb pain,” that affect cats years after the declawing procedure has been performed.

Declawing may result in abandonment

There is compelling evidence that declawing may result in increased biting and litter box avoidance, the behaviors that scientific researchers and shelter workers agree are the most common behavioral problems cited as reasons for relinquishment. A 2001 JAVMA article reported that cats suffer at least one behavioral problem after declaw or tendonectomy surgery. The study showed that 17.9% had an increase in biting frequency or intensity and that 15.4% would not use a litter box. A recent JAVMA article found that declawed cats were at an increased risk of relinquishment to animal shelters, and that among relinquished cats, 52.4% of declawed cats were reported to exhibit litter box avoidance, compared to 29.1% of non-declawed cats.

Alternatives to declawing exist and are effective

Nail caps can be glued painlessly to a cat's claws to prevent damage due to scratching (www.softpaws.com). A cat can be trained to use scratching posts to direct scratching behavior away from furniture. Also, regular nail trimming, repellent sprays, and double-sided tape applied to furniture help deter a cat from unwanted scratching. The use of smooth fabrics as furniture covering also discourages cats from scratching.

Veterinarian Nicholas Dodman, a board-certified animal behaviorist and professor at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, says, “There are very few people ... who could not be reeducated by an enthusiastic and well-informed veterinarian as to the inhumanity of declawing.”

Declawing is not required to protect immunocompromised persons

The risk of developing a disease from a cat scratch is exceedingly low. In his book, The Guide to Living with HIV Infection, John G. Bartlett, MD, Professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, writes that common sense practices to avoid bites or scratches are sufficient. He states, “You need not declaw the cat.” Another infectious diseases specialist, Ralph Hansen, MD, of Pacific Oaks Medical Group in Beverly Hills, says, “The risk of diseases being transmitted from cats comes primarily from the litter box and teeth, in that order, with claws far down the list. There is no rational medical reason for a physician to recommend declawing a cat.”



Diablo is a 6-year-old Siberian-Bengal tiger mix who was declawed on all four feet when he was only a baby. He was supposed to star in a Las Vegas magic show. When Diablo turned out to be in too much pain from his declawed paws to be a good assistant, the magician wanted the tiger to disappear. He asked a vet to kill Diablo. Hours before the scheduled lethal injection, Forever Wild, a wildlife sanctuary in Southern California, stepped in and took the tiger home.

He now has a new chance at a happy life, but needs to have his very painful paws repaired. The Paw Project team plans to fix Diablo's feet as soon as possible.

Diablo's corrective surgery, and the total cost for the facilities, technicians, and medication will be \$3500 to \$4000 per surgery. Many cats require up to three separate surgeries to repair all of their mutilated paws. Your contribution can help end declawing and give Diablo and other declawed big cats new lives. Please give them a chance to live without the pain they are suffering today.

Thank you.

I'm enclosing a check to **The Paw Project** to help end the crippling effects of declawing.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15.00 - Student/Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500.00 - Advocate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00 - Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000.00 - Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60.00 - Associate | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1500.00 - Sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 - Supporter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3000.00 - Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250.00 - Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ - other amount |

Credit card or PayPal donations can be accepted online at www.pawproject.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Thank you. **The Paw Project** is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Tax ID number 59-3782436