

## These women show they care Charity SPCA Animal Rescue receives \$17,900 from new philanthropic group

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SAINT JOHN - The local SPCA Animal Rescue received \$17,900 on Tuesday from the philanthropic group 100 Women Who Care's Greater Saint John chapter - \$100 each from 179 members.



The SPCA beat two other charities, Rocmaura Nursing Home and the Rothesay-Kings Nursing Home, to clinch the funds after a presentation by each and a vote by chapter members at the Hatheway Pavilion at Lily Lake.

The president of SPCA's board of directors, Melody McElman, said the money will be used to implement a low-cost spay-and-neuter program to tackle pet overpopulation.

"It is going to be a \$100,000 initiative, and this has given us a wonderful start," she said on the donation, adding that it will save the SPCA months of hard work and fundraising.

The three charities in the running were shortlisted randomly from 33 nominated by chapter members. The SPCA received about half of the 179 votes cast, although the chapter was unable to provide an exact breakdown.

A chapter member who voted for the SPCA, Maggie Zed, said she did so because the organization, which receives no government funding, has a more pressing need than the others.

"They need help yesterday," she said. "There's so much need for helping animals." The meeting was the chapter's first meeting after its founding in March by Debbie Rathwell, a corporate events planner, and Kelly Patterson, a financial adviser.

Rathwell said the idea came to her during a tourism conference in Fredericton, when one of the speakers talked about setting up a Halifax chapter after her presentation.

The group's concept is for its members, ideally at least 100 women, to donate \$100 dollars each on an ongoing basis to a charity of their collective choice.

Rathwell said it excited her due to its considerable impact - a minimum \$10,000 donation to charity - and relatively small time commitment.

"For me, it was about time and about the fact that I can actually see where my money was going and what it was doing," she said. "I was sitting in the audience listening to this, and it just resonated with me," she added.

"And I knew this was something I needed to bring back home.

"If it resonated with me like that - so quickly and so passionately, then at least there will be 100 women who feel the same way." The group was originally founded in 2006 by the realtor Karen Dunigan of Jackson, Mich., and currently has 47 American chapters.

The Greater Saint John chapter is one of at least six in Canada, along with ones in Toronto, London, Ont., Windsor-Essex, Ont., Halifax and St. John's. Its next meeting will take place September.

