



# Howard County Laurel-Free Roaming Cat Reduction: Year One

Project #  
18-307

County: Howard, Prince George's, Anne Arundel

Number of Cats Spayed: 134  
Number of Cats Neutered: 131

Number of Dogs Spayed:  
Number of Dogs Neutered:

Amount Received: \$15,400

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0

### Project Synopsis:

This project originally targeted unowned cats in the Howard County part of Laurel. It was later extended to include unowned cats throughout all of Laurel. A smaller number of owned cats were also altered for low income pet owners.



### Project Description:

Laurel Cats, Inc. is an all volunteer organization dedicated to humanely eliminating unowned, free-roaming cats in Laurel. We are accomplishing this goal through aggressive targeted TNR, offering free spay/neuter for pet cats, education, and rehoming of strays and cats owners can no longer keep. Six years ago Laurel, like many American communities, was overrun in homeless cats on our streets. We estimate that between 3,000 to 6,000 homeless cats died on Laurel's streets every year from disease, predation, and accidents. Most of these cats were concentrated in low-income ares of Laurel where residents, who were struggling to feed their own families, often spent hundreds of dollars on cat food each month trying to feed these unowned cats. This epidemic created significant hardship for man and cat alike.

Howard County Laurel was the last area we needed to aggressively target. The Laurel portion of Howard County does not share in the affluence of most of the rest of Howard County and there were many unowned cats in this area as well as outdoor cat caretakers and pet cat owners who needed help. This grant focused on completing the final area of Laurel as part of our initial TNR sweep of the entire Laurel community. Once our initial sweep of Howard County was complete, our grant was expanded to allow us to perform "maintenance" work in all of Laurel.

### Summary of Approach:

Laurel Cats community TNR methodology involves sending a crew of volunteers on the weekend to a neighborhood to know of every door, speak to every resident who opens the door, and leave fliers at homes where no one answers the door several weeks prior to trapping. Our goal is to is to identify every outdoor cat caretaker as well as every pet cat owner who needs spay/neuter assistance. One we have collected this data, we make appointments at the vet for the appropriate number of cats and organize a mass trapping the day



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before the vet appointments. Through this technique we not only trap 100% of the outdoor cats in the neighborhood in one sweep but we also educate all of the residents about spay/neuter.

**Accomplishments:**

This project officially brought all of Laurel into the "maintenance" phase of TNR. We now believe we have more than 90% of Laurel's cats altered. We know of no large colonies of unaltered cats remaining in Laurel and it is rare when we get any reports of unaltered cats remaining on Laurel's streets. As such, we have recently started a fostering and rescue program. The number of kittens born in Laurel in 2018 was so low that we were able to bring 100% of the young kittens we caught into foster care, to socialize and rehome! Additionally, our outreach work has paid off to the point where we are now very well known by cat owners and caretakers in Laurel and readily get phone calls when a cat has been spotted on the streets who has been abandoned allowing us to bring her in before she is harmed or reproduces.

Community support for this work has been overwhelming. We now have 119 volunteers on our roster and pack local restaurants ever month with our monthly fundraising dinners. These supporters and donors pick up the tab for the many medical bills not covered by the MDA grant allowing us to stretch out dollars in the robust full-service program we ow run. We are well known and well respected among the animal control managers and politicians who represent all three counties and the City of Laurel, so much so that we were recently invited by the Mayor to help him plan the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of Laurel.

**Lessons Learned:**

We have learned a lot about people through this work - primarily that people are generally motivated by good intentions and that a program that captures that motivation can direct it to make significant positive impacts for a community.

**Attachments:**

**For More Information Contact:**

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