



Sunshine's Friends Community Cat Project

Project #
18-333

County: Anne Arundel, Howard

Number of Cats Spayed:	68	Number of Dogs Spayed:	n/a
Number of Cats Neutered:	62	Number of Dogs Neutered:	n/a

Amount Received: \$8,876.01	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0.00
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Project Synopsis:

This project was an aggressive, targeted campaign to trap and spay/neuter/vaccinate cats living in four sites within Jessup (20794), Hanover (21076), and Severn (21144) MD. The project proposed to alter 130 cats in order to impact intake and euthanasia rates at Anne Arundel and Howard County animal shelters.



Project Description:

Sunshine's Friends Cat and Dog Rescue (www.sunshinesfriends.org) has been a 510(c)(3) non-profit charity since 2014; we are located in Jessup, MD. The area is a mix of light industry, warehouses, and residential neighborhoods. This project, which had a period of performance from October 2017 to September 2018 was completed in just 7 months by April 2018. It sought to reduce the intake and euthanasia rates at two county animal shelters by trapping, spaying/neutering and vaccinating 130 cats by targeting four known colonies within the local area in and around Jessup. Two sites were colonies that were being cared for by residents who fed the cats but did not have resources to have them all spayed/neutered. One site was a very large colony of cats living in a mobile home park with many low-income and transient residents. The last site was a colony living around warehouses in an industrial park and being fed by the workers. Because of the lack of spaying/neutering, all the sites had unchecked population growth. We planned to rapidly achieve a 100% TNR rate at each site and then implement a monitoring effort to detect new unaltered cats joining the colonies. We partnered with a local veterinary clinic to spay/neuter, vaccinate and ear-tip these cats at low cost.

A project coordinator managed our efforts, engaged with the property owners, colony/site managers, and caregivers, and lead the outreach portions of the project. We partnered with an expert trapper and purchased new drop traps to efficiently and quickly round up the cats and get them to the vet. Our trained staff oversaw the TNR process, cat evaluation, and placement efforts as well as training/advising colony caretakers. Our partner vet provided in-kind contributions in the form of substantially discounted TNR services. Our organization also contributed the cost of other vaccines and medical care such as amputation and wound care not covered by grant monies. In addition to reducing intake/euthanasia rates at county shelters, the project also



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reduced the risk of rabies spread, and impacted cat over-population in the area. It also relieved the burden on the local caretakers and reduced problematic behavior frequently displayed by unaltered cats.

Summary of Approach:

Most of the community cat colonies were already being managed by caregivers who had resources for food, but needed financial help with trapping/spaying/neutering/vaccinating. Before the project began, we reached out to the site owners/managers and caregivers to explain the project as well as to garner their support for developing intelligence on the cat populations such as numbers, genders, hiding places, and patterns of life. We asked them to feed the cats at consistent times and places so that when we trapped, we could do so at those same locations at the time the food was expected. Any cats with eartips indicating they had already been spayed/neutered were released if in good health; all others were taken to our vet the next weekday morning. Following surgery, the cats recuperated and were evaluated for potential rehoming through adoption. Cats that were truly feral were returned to the site and reintegrated with the colony. This year, we used lessons learned from previous years - we focussed on one site at a time and rapidly trapped all the unaltered cats. After achieving 100% TNR at one site, we transitioned to the monitoring phase at that one and moved on to the next site.

Accomplishments:

130 community cats living in 4 colonies trapped and spayed/neutered/vaccinated.

At each of the four sites we trapped and spayed/neutered all of the cats that were known to be there and achieved 100% success. These sites are now being monitored by the caregivers for new arrivals and are no longer in critical need of a focused TNR project.

We also covered medical costs, tests, and flea treatment for cats from our own operating budget. Four cats needed dental work, wound treatment, limb amputations, and eye enucleation in order to save the cats' lives and give them a good quality of life following TNR. These cats were all fully recovered and rehomed in most cases. Mother cats that had a litter of kittens were held until the kittens were weaned. After the kittens were spayed/neutered/vaccinated we found them forever homes through adoption.

Lessons Learned:

We targetted four colonies in the area, but we focused on one at a time, achieving at least 95% TNR before moving on to the next one. Occasionally we had to go back to trap stragglers or newcomers, but working to rapidly round up all the unaltered cats worked very well.

We pushed to complete the project early, finishing in a little over 6 months. This not only showed that we have the capacity to handle more volume, but also reduced the overall effort required because cats were not having more litters of kittens like they would if we trapped at sites piecemeal. It also let us trap more cats at other sites outside the grant scope using our normal operating budget.

Attachments:

List of community cats altered

For More Information Contact:

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