



Feral Spay and Neuter - Save Lives

Project #

23-8046

County: Cecil

Number of Cats Spayed: 179

Number of Dogs Spayed:

Number of Cats Neutered: 165

Number of Dogs Neutered:

Amount Received: \$37,800

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$18,185.00

Project Synopsis:

Chesapeake Feline Association's "Feral Spay and Neuter - Save Lives" Project focused on feral colonies in targeted areas of Cecil County, as well as the spay and neuter of felines owned by low-income residents of Cecil and Harford Counties. The Project supported efforts to alter felines with a target goal of 600.



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Project Description:

Chesapeake Feline Association (“CFA”) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all volunteer, no-kill feline rescue. CFA’s main goals for this Project were (i) to continue to reduce the feral cat overpopulation in Cecil and Harford Counties where there are many unsterilized felines; and (ii) to provide low-income residents of these counties with free spay and neuter services in order to ensure that owned cats did not also contribute to the feral, unsterilized population.

Summary of Approach:

CFA identified feral colonies for TNR and provided free spay/neuter services to low-income residents. Initially, all surgeries were expected to occur at our Miss Cat Spay and Neuter Surgical Suite in Perryville, MD. We performed surgeries there in January and February, despite significant scheduling and cost obstacles. However, we were forced to close Miss Cat and quickly readjust our approach. CFA then undertook efforts to engage partner clinics in order to continue to provide spay/neuter services for feral/TNR cats, as well as owned cats of low-income residents. After having no success finding local vets to contract with for grant (or even reasonable) prices, we contracted with & began transporting cats to Brandywine Valley SPCA (New Castle, DE) for surgeries. We also utilized Forgotten Cats (Trainer, PA) and Faithful Friends (New Castle, DE). By initiating an organized transport system, we were able to continue to get targeted cats in Cecil and Harford Counties spayed and neutered.

Accomplishments:

CFA is very proud of our accomplishments, especially considering the significant obstacles we had to overcome in 2023. CFA has steadily increased our TNR work. We have continued to work in existing colonies and are constantly researching additional colonies and aiding colony caretakers. We work tirelessly to provide needed spay/neuter feline services to the Cecil and Harford County region. The nationwide veterinary shortage impacts rural areas even harder than elsewhere, so we are proud to do what can to meet the community’s needs with regard to spay/neuter services for feral/TNR cats as well as those owned by low-income residents. CFA truly cares about all of the cats that come into our care. For this reason, when a cat is brought in for spay/neuter, we ensure that it also receives all vaccinations and other important medical care at CFA’s own expense. We feel strongly about taking care of the medical needs of any feral cats before releasing them back into the community.



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Lessons Learned:

At the start of 2023, CFA fully expected that it would continue to operate Miss Cat. Though COVID did have an impact and changes had to be made, we had hoped that we could continue to increase our numbers. Given that expectation, we expected to alter 600 cats, but sadly, we fell short of that goal. However, we did learn to be flexible and think more creatively. The scheduling and transport to and from our partner clinics brought many challenges, especially with weather and last-minute schedule changes, but we continue to adapting and overcome obstacles. We had to rely more on our volunteers to ensure cats were trapped when we could schedule them for transport. We had difficulty finding enough volunteers to drive to DE or PA. We also learned that record keeping is more difficult without the software system Miss Cat had. We sometimes had difficulties obtaining the accurate and complete documents we needed from partner clinics. But we learned beneficial strategies for the future.

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