



Sunshine says "We can do it!" spay and neuter every feral friend

Project #

24-9050

County: Anne Arundel

Number of Cats Spayed: 169

Number of Dogs Spayed:

Number of Cats Neutered: 156

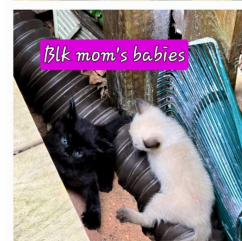
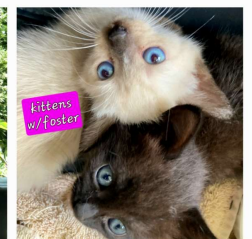
Number of Dogs Neutered:

Amount Received: \$16,255

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0.00

Project Synopsis:

This project funded part of our multi-year efforts to control the feral cat population living in colonies in parts of Anne Arundel and Howard counties. We proposed to perform targeted Trap Neuter Return (TNR), spaying/neutering/vaccinating 325 feral cats at 7 large colonies (3 in Anne Arundel and 4 in Howard) in order to reduce the intake and euthanasia rates at both of those county animal control facilities.



Maryland Department of Agriculture
Spay and Neuter Grants Program



Project Description:

Sunshine's Friends Cat and Dog Rescue has been a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity since 2014 operating within 10 miles of our primary location in Jessup, MD. The area is a mix of light industry, warehouses, and residential neighborhoods, and the zones along the US Route 1 corridor and southern Baltimore beltway have a higher concentration of unaltered strays and community (feral) cat colonies than other parts of the counties. This project, which ran from October 2023 to June 2024, managed to spay/neuter 325 community cats living in 7 known large colonies, and then transitioned them to managed colonies. As part of a multi-year effort, we have steadily reduced the number of feral cats taken in at local county animal shelters. The project funded the cost of spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccines for the cats. Transportation, outreach, vaccines other than rabies, and surgeries beyond spay/neuter were covered by our normal operating budget.

Summary of Approach:

Long before the grant award, we began outreach to colony caregivers and property managers to determine the scope of the problem and prioritize them. We take on one colony at a time until it is 100% complete, then move to the next one. Before working at a site, our coordinator lines up resources and schedules vet clinics. We establish a rhythm of TNR two times per week to optimize people/equipment resources and keep regular schedules. When trapping, any ear-tipped cats previously spayed/neutered are released if in good health; all others we take to our vets the next morning. Following surgery, we recuperate and evaluate them for potential rehoming through adoption. Truly feral cats are returned to the site to reintegrate with the colony. We trap at each site until complete, then follow up with outreach to catch stragglers/newcomers. This year we partnered with 7 vet clinics who provide substantially discounted rates. We cover the costs of extra vaccines, medical care, and flea treatment.

Accomplishments:

In just 8 months of the planned one-year project, we managed to spay/neuter 325 community (feral) cats living in 7 large colonies in 2 local counties. This number is in addition to the regular projects that we run via our in-house programs. We brought all 7 colonies under control, preventing future kitten population explosions and reducing intake/euthanasia at both county-run shelters. We also provided additional treatment and/or surgery to any cat that needed it and cared for them until fully recovered. We trained the caregivers at each colony in best practices for community cats colony management. Each one expressed how grateful they were that this program exists and that all the cats in their colonies are now spayed/neutered and vaccinated. Once the grant funds were expended, we provided our own funding to cover any stragglers or newcomers at the colonies to ensure we maintain 100% spay/neuter of the colonies.



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Lessons Learned:

Demand for programs like these is outpacing the available supply due to the current economic situation in the country. A shortage of veterinarians is limiting appointment availability. We were extra vigilant to make sure that none of the precious appointments were missed and worked with partner vets to fill any vacant slots they had. That close coordination allowed us to react quickly and avoid the typical 90-day wait for appointments.

For More Information Contact:

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