



SAVE A KITTY FERAL CAT PROGRAM, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

www.saveakitty.org

Congratulations to Dr. Leslie Elliott, DVM: We are sending a special welcome to Dr. Leslie Elliott, as she is the new owner of the Mineral Wells Veterinary Clinic located on Elizabeth Pike. Dr. Elliott, who has been very dedicated to the feral cat program, has helped us tremendously. We would like to send her a special thank you and ask that you patronize her facility. Your pets will love her and so will you! Please call (304) 489-2799 to schedule your pet's appointment. Her wonderful staff along with her mother, Elaine Elliott have also been very dedicated to the feral cat program and supported our efforts. Thank you and special wishes from all of us.

3rd Annual Benefit Sale: Save a Kitty FCP will be holding their 3rd annual benefit sale on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at the Jefferson Elementary School on Plum Street in Parkersburg. The hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. We are asking for donations of items for the sale. Please call one of our members for the drop-off location of donated items. Judy Deem @ (304) 679-5576 or Carol Hanna @ (304) 428-4074. If you have donated to our sale previously, the drop-off location is the same.

Feral Cat Facts: Feral cats are cats that grow up with no human socialization or stray cats that have been outside long enough to revert to a wild state.

- They can usually not be tamed and are most content living outside.
- They often live in family groups called colonies.
- Stray cats are cats that have been lost or abandoned and have joined a feral colony but are not fully wild. Stray cats can usually be re-tamed and placed in homes.
- Estimates are **60-100 million** of these cats in the United States.
- Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the non-lethal

population control plan in which entire colonies are humanely (and painlessly) trapped, vaccinated, ear tipped and sterilized by veterinarians.

- Kittens and cats that are tame enough to be adopted are sterilized and then placed in good homes. Adult cats are returned to their colonies to live out their lives under the dedicated supervision of volunteer caretakers. Cat populations are gradually reduced. Behaviors such as the yowling of females in heat or the spraying and fighting of male cats are virtually eliminated. The cats live healthy, safe and peaceful lives in their colonies.

TNR works. Shelters have been euthanizing feral cats for years and there are more of them now than ever. Obviously, euthanasia does not work. **TNR** (Trap, Neuter, Return) allows the cats that are healthy animals but un-adoptable, to continue living their lives with their colony members in the area they call home. Killing feral cats simply because they are not adoptable is unacceptable when Trap, Neuter, Return is a viable alternative. We must all work toward a "no kill" society and call for responsible action toward feral and homeless cats. The fact is that feral cats have declined by 2/3 since the inception of Trap, Neuter, Return. Is it time to change our shelter policies? You bet!

Did You Know? One un-spayed female cat with an average lifespan of twelve (12) years living outside and all her offspring can be expected to be responsible for over 3200 kittens if there is no human intervention.

Many people still believe that a female cat should have one litter of kittens before being spayed. This is **not true** and ridiculous in a day and age where we are euthanizing thousands of baby kittens on a daily basis.

Feral Friends Network: If you would like to join the feral friends network, go to www.alleycat.org today and sign up. You will receive updates and a newsletter. We at Save a Kitty Feral Cat Program consider Alley Cat Allies our “parent resource group”. They provide wonderful information on ways to help feral and homeless cats.

What does the “Perfect” TNR program look like? Communities must work together to make TNR a successful public policy. The perfect TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) program fully involves animal control agencies and residents in an active program of **publicly funded** spay/neuter and TNR outreach. The local shelters must identify ear tipped cats and the location they arrived from in order for the feral cat program to return them to their living area.

- The feral cat program would track all calls received from feral cat caretakers and identify locations where feral cats are living.
- Educating callers about spay/neuter options, with information on how TNR works.
- Loaning humane traps to the public for TNR purposes only, not for trap and kill.
- Helping residents to mediate and solve neighborhood issues about the cats.
- Working to secure publicly funded, low-or-no cost services for the cats they care-take.
- Ensuring that 100% of shelter animals are sterilized before adoption.
- Conducting workshops for caregivers and residents to teach colony management.

Establish a shelter policy that no feral cats are accepted, instead they are sterilized, ear-tipped and released in their home location, which is known when they are brought to the shelter and ear tipped cats are immediately returned to their colony. How do we fund this? We spend millions of taxpayer’s money each year to destroy them, instead lets fix them!

We hope this perfect model TNR program is the norm very soon for our community and statewide.

Special Thanks: We would like to thank the following supporters who kindly donated funds to purchase a gas grill for our July 2nd raffle. We appreciate your support and dedication! They are: Pat Elias, Roger and Jane Brown, Linda Miller, Carol Hanna and Gary and Kandi Habeb.

Vacuum Effect Documented: Feral cats establish territories based on availability of food sources

and shelter. When feral cats are removed from this environment, other cats move in to take advantage of whatever sources of food and shelter are available. They will also travel to look for food, only to return to their home base. A feeding ban will not make the cats go away. Cats bond to their territory and are opportunistic scavengers that can survive on garbage. If not fed by caring citizens, they become more visible as they search for new sources of food. Trap-and-remove, which has been the traditional approach to managing feral cats, **doesn’t work**. If it did, why do we have more feral/homeless cats now than ever? It may achieve a temporary lowering of the cats but un-sterilized survivors breed prolifically and new cats move in to the now-available territory. This is known as the vacuum effect. TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) is the humane, cost-effective solution to managing feral cats. Trap and remove requires continuous trapping and killing, is an unending budget expense for taxpayers and is not supported by a humane community.

True or False? Feral cats are not nurturing or have emotion? **False!** As you can see by the following picture, this feral daddy cat and his male kitten, both sterilized and ear-tipped through Save a Kitty’s TNR program, care very much about each other. Their lives have quality and they deserve to live, just like any other outside creature.



We need your help: We currently have a nice supply of lumber for building cat shelters and feeding bins but we don’t have anyone to build them! If you can help, please call Kandi at (304) 482-8987. Winter will be here soon!