



# Sunshine's Friends Community Cat TNR

Project #  
17-234

County: Howard

Number of Cats Spayed:	50	Number of Dogs Spayed:	n/a
Number of Cats Neutered:	53	Number of Dogs Neutered:	n/a

Amount Received: \$6112.36	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0.00
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### Project Synopsis:

The project targeted four sites with large colonies totaling over 100 community cats. Two sites were in an industrial area with warehouses and loading docks. One site was at a church where pet owners dump unwanted cats. The last site was in a mobile home park with low-income and transient residents.



### Project Description:

Sunshine's Friends Cat Rescue and Sanctuary ([www.sunshinescatrescue.org](http://www.sunshinescatrescue.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 ran from October 2016 to September 2017, sought to reduce the intake and euthanasia rates at two county animal shelters by trapping, spaying/neutering and vaccinating over 100 cats by targeting four known colonies within the Jessup local area. Two colonies are within a huge complex of food, produce, and seafood warehouses where there are large populations of unaltered community cats; this site was begun last year, but the size of the site and number of cats there required a multi-year project. The second site is at a church where pet owners are known to dump cats knowing they will be cared for. The last site is a large colony of cats living in a mobile home park with many low-income and transient residents. We planned to achieve a 100% TNR rate at each site over the grant period 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 a low cost.

A project coordinator managed our efforts, engaged with the community and colony/site managers and caregivers, and lead the educational outreach portions of the project. Trained staff oversaw the TNR process, cat evaluation, and placement efforts as well as training/advising colony caretakers. We used the Jessup community association for outreach support and our partner vet provided in-kind contributions in the form of



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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 countt shelters, the project also 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 spaying/neutering/vaccinating. These sites had seen some previous sporadic TNR efforts, but they needed a dedicated program to achieve 100% of the cats. Before the project began, we reached out to the site owners/managers and caregivers to explain the project and enlist their aid in developing intelligence on the cat populations. We had them feed the colonies at consistent times and places and when we trapped, we did so at those same locations at the time the cats expected food. Any cats with eartips indicating they had already been spayed/neutered were released; 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. After achieving 100% TNR at the site, we transitioned to the monitoring phase by instructing the caregivers to be on the lookout for newcomers without eartips or any sick/injured cats that need care.

### **Accomplishments:**

At each of the four sites we trapped and spayed/neutered all of the cats that the caregivers estimated were there and achieved 100% success. In some cases we trapped a few more cats than expected due to ongoing dumping or pregnancies. These sites are now being monitored by the caregivers for new arrivals and are no longer in critical need of a focused TNR project. One site was begun last year and due to the size and number of cats required a multi-year project to accomplish 100%.

We also covered medical costs, tests, and flea treatment for cats from our own operating budget. On occasion, we covered wound treatments, limb amputations, and eye enucleations 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 some cases. We stretched program dollars by transporting multiple cats to and from the vet in a single vehicle whenever possible.

### **Lessons Learned:**

We targetted four colonies in the area, and in so doing often had to bounce from one to another when there were pregnant females, injured cats, or kittens at a site. This split our focus somewhat and in one case we missed an opportunity to prevent a female from having kittens. We put the cat family into foster care and then spayed the mother after the kittens were weened and adopted into loving homes.

We pushed to complete the project early, finishing in 10 months. In the last 2 months we used our extra capacity to trap more cats, but we did so outside the grant scope using our own operating budget.

### **Attachments:**

SFCRS-16Q4-Feral.pdf (list of animals altered).

### **For More Information Contact:**

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#### **Organization Name and Address:**

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