



# Fixing Frederick's Ferals

Project #  
18-320

County: Frederick

Number of Cats Spayed:	390	Number of Dogs Spayed:	0
Number of Cats Neutered:	270	Number of Dogs Neutered:	0
Amount Received: \$30,818.88		Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA):	0

### Project Synopsis:

This project was a Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage effort to trap, sterilize, and vaccinate 660 community cats in the City of Frederick, MD.



### Project Description:

Fixing Frederick's Ferals was a 12-month (Nov '17 - Nov '18) Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage project through which Tip Me Frederick (TMF) sterilized and vaccinated 660 community cats whose colony caregivers reside within the City of Frederick, MD. The project involved working with colony caregivers to trap unaltered cats; transporting the cats to and from Frederick to Davidsonville to our low-cost veterinary clinic partner, Spay Spa and Neuter Nook (SSNN); sterilization and vaccination for rabies and feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia (FVRCP); housing cats during recovery; and, returning the cats to their colony caregivers post-recovery. The costs of sterilization and the rabies vaccination were covered 100% by the MDA, while TMF covered the cost of the FVRCP vaccine and other extraordinary medical costs for sick or injured cats. In most cases, colony caregivers were unable to afford sterilization/vaccination services through local veterinarians, making this program the only humane option to manage feline over-population.

### Summary of Approach:

TMF worked with over 200 colony caregivers located in the City of Frederick to identify and trap unaltered cats. In some cases, when a caregiver was unable to trap, TMF volunteers performed the trapping in the 24 hours prior to a scheduled clinic. On the morning of the clinic, TMF rented a van and transported an average of 44 cats to SSNN for sterilization and vaccination. TMF volunteers then returned cats to their colony caregivers once they were fully recovered.



In the course of trapping, TMF also identified over five dozen kittens and "friendly" cats who were then fostered and made available for adoption; this number was substantially higher than on other recent TNRM efforts, presumably because there was a higher percentage of unowned (but not necessarily feral or semi-feral) cats in this geography, i.e. there were more cats who were socialized to humans but not considered to be "owned." We worked closely with local cat rescue groups such as Friends for Life and Animal Welfare League of Frederick County (whose main mission is to foster and adopt cats and kittens), although as these groups became full, TMF volunteers fostered cats and kittens and then adopted them via petfinder.com and Pet Valu weekly adoption events.

### **Accomplishments:**

TMF sterilized and vaccinated 660 cats in total; of this, 59% were females! We helped 12 colonies comprised of over 30 cats per colony, as well as completed over a dozen smaller colonies that were either partially completed or were comprised of all unaltered cats.

As public awareness of TMF's program continues to grow throughout Frederick County, and through referrals from local veterinarians and Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC), TMF no longer has to invest any funds or effort in publicity to ensure clinics are full. This allows us to use funds solely for veterinary care.

Also, we were successful in receiving a small grant (\$1,200) from the Community Foundation of Frederick County to help defray the cost of a higher than normal number of extraordinary medical issues that required treatment during our spay/neuter clinics. Twenty-two percent of the cats scheduled for sterilization required antibiotics and 7% of the cats had major injuries or conditions such as infected eyes which required enucleation, umbilical hernias that had to be removed, or injuries requiring amputation. The combination of the grant from CFFC and social media fund-raising enabled us to use the remaining MDA funds to sterilize more cats.

Although we have anecdotal evidence which points to the positive impact of TNRM in this grant's target zip code, we are continuing to work with FCAC to more accurately assess the impact of TNRM (specifically) on intake and euthanasia by zip code.

### **Lessons Learned:**

Since TMF has been using this same approach (described above) for 5 years (trapping, transporting) in partnership with SSNN, our process is well-documented and understood by both the veterinary staff at SSNN and by our volunteers. We've learned to "book" more cats than can actually be accommodated by SSNN, knowing that some colony caregivers will not be able to trap the number of cats they projected. In rare cases, we've trapped the actual number we scheduled and thankfully, SSNN was able to accommodate us. Flexibility is key which is why although the program covered 12 months, TMF ended up holding 15 clinics (inclement weather resulted in lower than expected numbers of cats trapped in several months so we doubled up clinics in warmer months).

Our greatest challenges continue to be 1) finding and retaining volunteers to drive the van each month; 2) fund-raising to cover (or at least defray) the cost of the FVRCP vaccines and the extra medical expenses for sick or injured cats; and, 3) working with FCAC to more accurately assess the impact of TNRM efforts on intake and euthanasia. Our goal is to be able to track the number of cats who are truly "feral" or "semi-feral" (vs strays with a "bad temperament") by zip code that enter FCAC to determine: 1) if numbers are decreasing and by how much given the existence of TNRM efforts in those zip codes; 2) how many of these same cats are euthanized (we estimate that it's close to 100% currently); and, 3) the percent of ear-tipped cats that are brought into FCAC, returned to their colonies, or euthanized.

We've also recognized that as much as we want to remain a TNRM-focused group, we will inevitably trap kittens and "friendly" cats who should not be returned to a colony. We work closely with rescue-focused



groups to foster and adopt these cats but when these groups are full, we've come to accept that we need a cadre of foster parents. Over the course of this grant, we have ended up fostering 32 cats and kittens.

**Attachments:**

**For More Information Contact:**

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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM**

