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PROJECT



Feline Community Assistance
Rescue and Adoptions

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Project Cat is a nonprofit tax-deductible organization

Summer 2012



Dear Friends of Project Cat,

This is "kitten season," as it's known in the animal shelter world, when unspayed female cats over six months old give birth to the first, second, or even third litter of kittens for the year. It's a time of anxiety for shelter staff as they brace for the innumerable phone calls that will pour in about litters of found or unwanted kittens and their adult mother.

We take kittens into our shelter from a number of sources. Some from homes where adult cats were never sterilized and the owners couldn't find anyone to adopt the offspring. Some are discovered by homeowners nesting beneath a porch or shed or in a backyard woodpile. Some mother cats bring their kittens to a front door knowing from previous experience that food and shelter are available there. Some are left in cardboard boxes by roadsides, in front of buildings, in parking lots, on front lawns, or tossed in the woods. Some are found, many are not.

Most frustrating to us -- because these births are preventable -- are the litters produced by female cats whose caretakers didn't get them spayed. When we accept kittens from these homes, it is with the understanding that the people must either surrender all unsterilized cats to us or allow us to spay or neuter them so they don't reproduce again. A common excuse given by owners of indoor un-

spayed females is that the cat escaped outdoors only once. But once is all it takes. The drive to reproduce is strong.

Some domestic cats and kittens are friendly, having been raised and handled by people. Others are fearful of humans and act like wild animals. These



cats, referred to as feral, were never socialized or, after experiencing contact with humans, were abandoned and reverted to a wild state after just a generation or two. Feral cats range from asocial and wary to extremely aggressive. In addition to human socialization the genetic makeup of a cat plays a role in determining if a feral cat will tolerate humans in its world.

Outdoor feral cats found with litters require humane live trapping. Unless the kittens are young enough to not yet have

developed fear and the ability to move away from potential danger it is necessary to live trap them along with their mother. If the nest of kittens is inaccessible -- such as in a groundhog hole or beneath floorboards -- we have to wait until the kittens are old enough for the mother to start bringing them to a food source before we can trap them, usually between 6 to 8 weeks of age.

Extreme care is required when we trap an adult female during the breeding season because of the possibility that she might be a nursing mother. If the location of the kittens is unknown or inaccessible, the mother cat may have to be released so her kittens don't starve to death.

So the bulk of Project Cat's summer work is cut out for us and we ask that you help us respond to as many "kitten calls" as possible by making a much needed donation.

Your donation will help us to get to these cats in dire need, to care for them as they wait for adoption, and to help pay for sterilization to stop the next litter from being born. And if you can, please offer a home to one or two of our endearing cats or kittens by adopting.

We appreciate your support.

Gail Mihocko/Director
and our
Dedicated Volunteers

