Animal Welfare League
of Frederick County

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NEW CLINIC HELPS PEOPLE HELP THEIR PETS

Animal Welfare League Sterilizes 31 Cats at Inaugural Spay/Neuter Clinic for Low Income Residents

Frederick, MD (October 12, 2009) - The Animal Welfare League of Frederick County (AWLFC) reached a milestone on Saturday, October 10th, 2009 with the establishment of its first spay/neuter clinic for cats. Saturday's event, at which 31 cats were spayed or neutered, was designed to give Frederick's citizens in need a low-cost option to sterilize their pets. It was the first of monthly spay/neuter clinics organized and subsidized by the AWLFC to be held at their new headquarters in the Eastgate Shopping Center in Frederick.

Mary Hiatt, president of the AWLFC, emphasized the urgency of making spay/neuter more readily available for anyone who needs it. "In less than 24 hours from our newspaper ad, the clinic was full, and we already have a waiting list for the November clinic," Hiatt said. She added that sterilization is the single most important way to end the overpopulation of cats and dogs that leads to pet homelessness and euthanasia. "Over 5 million healthy cats and dogs are euthanized every year in the US for no reason other than that they were born."

The establishment of the clinic represents the achievement of one of the AWLFC's strategic goals and involved 4 months of planning, a dozen volunteers, and three local mobile veterinary practices. "While we did 31 cats at our first clinic, this is just one step toward solving the problem of overpopulation in Frederick County," said Hiatt. She emphasized that it will take a community approach and stressed the need for more public – private partnerships between county and city government, local animal welfare organizations, the veterinary community, businesses, and individual citizens. "We need to work together to make spay/neuter more readily available to anyone who needs it and to incentivize communities to use Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) to manage feral and free-roaming cats," explained Hiatt. TNR involves trapping, sterilizing, vaccinating, and releasing feral or free-roaming cats back to a committed caregiver who provides food and shelter.

"The overwhelming response to this clinic demonstrates loud and clear that most people want to be responsible, even if it's for a feral cat that they don't even claim to own as a pet," emphasized Hiatt. "AWLFC was established to help animals but in reality, we have to help people first."

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About the Animal Welfare League of Frederick County: The Animal Welfare League of Frederick County (AWLFC) is an all-volunteer, no-kill rescue organization dedicated to ending pet homelessness and ensuring humane treatment for every animal in Frederick County. Established in 2001, the organization has over 100 members and active programs that include: **foster care and adoption services** for over 300 cats and dogs annually; **Fixing Frederick's Felines**, AWLFC's Trap/Neuter/Release program that traps, alters, releases, and cares for feral cat colonies; and, support for Meals on Wheels, ***Pets Eat, Too*** program, where the group provides senior citizens with food for their pets. The AWLFC also helps with hoarding cases, animal cruelty, and animal emergencies. For more information, visit our website at www.awlfc.org or call 301-663-5855.