



FERAL CAT FOCUS INC. COMMUNITY CAT NEWS

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www.feralcatfocus.org

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PROVIDING FERAL & FREE-ROAMING CATS WITH FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

DECEMBER 2019

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON...REMEMBER

Not every cat has a warm, safe home.

Many cats are left to fend for themselves outdoors.



During the holiday season, we give thanks for the comforts of a warm home, hearty food, a roof over our heads...but feral cats struggle throughout the year to find food, fresh water, safe shelter and to just survive.

Feral and free-roaming cats who only know the outdoor life shouldn't be forgotten. Saving one cat may not change the world, but it will change the world for that one cat.

Feral Cat FOCUS is committed to humanely reducing the feral and free-roaming cat population in Western New York through the use of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return as fully understood, accepted and practiced in every Western New York community.

Feral Cat FOCUSs programs are entirely volunteer-run and supported solely by the financial support of the community. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the dedicated work of our volunteers, we are working hard to make a difference in our community.

This holiday season please remember Feral Cat FOCUS and consider supporting our work with a charitable donation to help make 2020 a better year for free-roaming cats.

Your gift will be used to help them live safer, healthier, longer lives.

You can mail a donation with the enclosed donation form or online at www.feralcatfocus.org

**On Behalf of Everyone at Feral Cat FOCUS,
We Wish You a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year**

WHAT FERAL CAT FOCUS ACCOMPLISHED IN 2019

WE ARE GIVING A VOICE TO THE VOICELESS AND HELPING THE HELPLESS

It is often difficult and emotional work that we do. But as we close 2019 we know that the work will—and must—go on. Feral Cat FOCUS continued to carry out our mission through the use of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR). TNVR is a humane non-lethal method of controlling cat populations in which free-roaming cats are humanely trapped, evaluated, spayed or neutered, vaccinated against rabies and distemper, and returned to their outdoor homes.

Feral Cats Had Some Significant Wins This Year And Some Failures As Well. Let's Talk About Our WINS.

- The Village of Brockport (Monroe County) went TNVR thanks to some hardworking friends - Joanne Trabor and Laura Burns who is from Habitat for Cats. These gals worked very hard to get Brockport to go TNVR and we salute them.
- The City of Olean (Cattaraugus County) has gone TNVR thanks to Jamie Lawrence of Catt County Cat Nippers and the Olean Common Council members. Olean also added funds to help support the City of Olean TNVR project. Congrats!
- The Town of Evans (Erie County) is showing signs of going TNVR (documents pending).
- Williamsville (Erie County) re-organized their TNVR ordinance - it is now very clear as to their support for TNVR.

- Feral Cat FOCUS subsidizes every feral cat that enters the doors of Operation PETS Spay/Neuter Clinic of WNY and will continue to do that.
- In addition to Feral Cat FOCUS, Operation PETS also subsidize every feral that enters their doors.
- Feral Cat FOCUS helps financially support as many large (over 10 cats) community mass trapping TNVR projects as we can. In 2019 we helped major TNVR projects in Niagara County, Genesee County, Cattaraugus County, Chautauqua County, Erie County and the City of Buffalo. Please understand that we can only financially support large TNVR projects when we have funds. If we do not have the funds, we cannot support these various cases.

- Feral Cat FOCUS helped with several hoarding cases at the request of the SPCA Serving Erie County. These were cases where feral unsocial cats had been gathered in homes of elderly residents who had passed away, residents who had gone into assisted living leaving the cats to fend for themselves, or cases where the number of unsocial cats in a home was a detriment to both cats and humans.
- Feral Cat FOCUS phone volunteers received **1,109 phone calls and 100 emails** requesting information and guidance on TNVR, wanting to borrow humane traps, or wanting to make surgery appointments for their colony of cats.
- As of November 5, 2019, Feral Cat FOCUS (along with Operation PETS Spay/Neuter Clinic) spayed/neutered **2,725 feral/free roaming cats**. This number may go higher as we end the year. Thanks to all of our supporters, we were able to continue to subsidize these cats. We thank Operation PETS for their subsidy and all the medical help they have given the free roaming cats.

The SETBACKS We Are Having: There are some Animal Control Officers that still support the trapping and killing of cats! Two that stand out are the Town of Clarence and the City Lackawanna. Their laws on cats need to get changed - we are not living in the dark ages. Write and call the supervisor's offices of these towns/cities that permit the killing of cats.

WHO WILL PROVIDE FOR YOUR FERAL COLONY IF YOU ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO?



As pet owners we need to provide for our animals if we are no longer able to care for them. If you are a feral caregiver this includes your outside feral and free roaming cats. They even need MORE help. Please remember the needs of these poor creatures.

Who will provide for their care if you are no longer able to? There is no "magic place" for these cats to go. Feral Cat FOCUS cannot come in and provide re-homing and care for the cats.

As caregivers we already have a vested interest in the well-being of these cats. If you do not have formal arrangements designating new caregivers these cats may suffer, starve or be destined to a fate that you would never have wanted. So to prevent unintended consequences, please make necessary provisions to provide for their care if you are no longer able to.

WINTER TNVR TRAPPING POLICY

Feral Cat FOCUS does not support winter TNVR in Western New York because our winters can be severe and temperatures can be in the teens (or below). We know other areas of the country support winter TNVR but their winters are not our winters with freezing temps and several feet of snow.

During winter you cannot safely trap and keep feral/free-roaming cats warm enough to heal properly after spay/neuter surgery. If you hold feral cats too long they often become sick. These cats are already struggling to stay alive we don't want to put one more obstacle in their way.

Think of it this way: A cat that just had surgery is put out in the freezing cold with an incision and a shaved tummy with no fur to protect her from the cold. She is exposed to the elements. She may not have a warm dry shelter. She may have to forge through snow to return to her colony. She has to find a food source in a snow storm. This would be cruel to do to a cat already struggling to survive a Western New York winter.

In the spring Feral Cat FOCUS will kick into high gear and begin spaying/neutering cats. We normally start scheduling surgery appointments mid-late March (depending on weather).

Appointments are required. Never trap before you have an appointment!! You don't want to trap cats and then have nowhere to take them.

Colony Management – Winter Weather Tips

Shelter ~ Feeding Station ~ Food & Water ~ Safety Tips
feralcatfocus.org/colony-management-winter-tips

**DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT A FERAL CAT TRAPPER OR
CAREGIVER'S DAY IS LIKE?
MANY OF YOU KNOW, BUT HERE IS ANOTHER LOOK**

Feral Cat FOCUS is entirely volunteer-run. Without our volunteers, there would be no Feral Cat FOCUS. They give their time so willingly, their compassion so unconditionally. Time and time again, our volunteers look past the hard work and delight in the very smallest accomplishments.

We're out there trapping, helping and educating caregivers and communities, loaning humane traps, and working with animal shelters. The thousands of cats we have helped have taught us how best to help the cats and the people who care for them.

The following pictures highlight our volunteers "in action" with a large TNVR mass trapping project.

DAY STARTS - HUMANE TRAPS AND CRATES ARE LOADED
VOLUNTEERS READY TO HEAD OUT TO TNVR PROJECTS



(pictured above is Sue - one of our wonder volunteer trap loaners)

VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE AT COLONY TO BEGIN TRAPPING PROJECTS
THERE ARE SO MANY CATS NEEDING HELP



HUMANE TRAPS ARE SET
VOLUNTEERS CHECK BACK LATER TO SEE IF CATS ARE IN TRAPS



THIS IS "JUNE CARTER CASH"



WHO DO WE HAVE HERE? A KITTEN!



OH LOOK! A CHEESEBURGER!

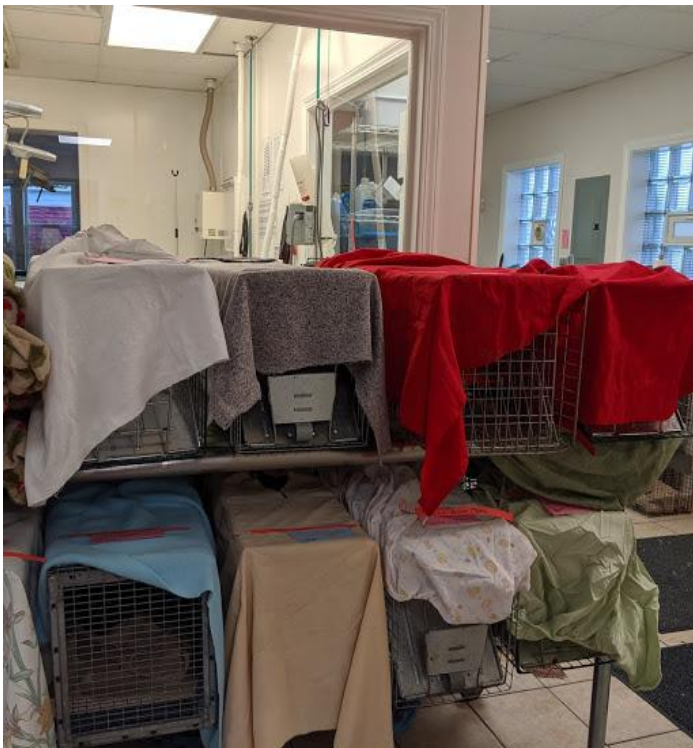
LOOK WHAT WE FOUND IN A BALE OF HAY

When foster homes are available, young kittens are removed and surrendered to rescue & adoption organization to be placed for adoption.



READY FOR TRANSPORT

Cats in traps are loaded up for transport to Operation PETS Spay/Neuter Clinic.



CATS ARRIVE AT OPERATION PETS SPAY/NEUTER CLINIC

The trap doubles as a cage while cats await surgery and during their recovery afterwards.

Feral cats actually prefer tight, dark spaces when confined, not large open ones.

The traps are kept covered which helps keep the cats calm.

OPERATION PETS STAFF PREP THE CATS FOR SURGERY



OPERATION PETS VETERINARIANS BEGIN SURGERY

The cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and eartipped (the universal sign that a feral/free-roaming cat has been neutered and vaccinated).



AFTER SURGERY CATS ARE HELD IN RECOVERY AREA

Trap covers are kept open in the front of the trap so that staff can monitor cats during recovery

The cats are held in recovery until they are fully awake.

They stay in recovery until they do not require further medical attention and there are no post-surgical complications.



THE LAST STEP!! **CATS ARE RETURNED** **TO THEIR OUTDOOR HOME**

After recovery cats are transported to a holding area where they are kept for 12-72 hours for additional post-surgical recovery. They are then returned to their colony to live out their lives in their outdoor home—healthy, spayed/neutered and vaccinated. Pictured below is Jamie—one of our dedicated volunteers.



HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE, **ONE CAT AT A TIME**

We hope that consider supporting Feral Cat FOCUS and our work with a charitable donation. With your help we can continue to protect and improve lives of free-roaming cats. Your gift to Feral Cat FOCUS will mean:

- More feral/free-roaming cats will be spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and given medical treatment.
- More caregivers will be trained on TNVR and proper colony management.
- More communities will be educated on humanely managing their community cats.

CAREGIVERS CORNER

WELCOME NEW **CAREGIVERS/TRAPPERS** **JOAN AND CHUCK**



Joan and Chuck began to notice what seemed to be stray cats in their Amherst neighborhood. Being kind hearted they began to feed these few cats. Before long they also noticed KITTENS (moms didn't bring the kittens until they were too old to be socialized) and their backyard population more than doubled.

Joan heard about Feral Cat FOCUS and called us. Neither Joan nor Chuck had trapped before so a Feral Cat FOCUS volunteer brought them traps, showed them how to use them, and discussed different trapping methods that might be more effective in their situation.

Joan and Chuck went to work and in short order brought their colony under control. Six females were part of this group so we can all do the math if Joan and Chuck had not acted quickly and responsibly. Their neighbors had not complained but that situation would surely have changed if Joan and Chuck had not intervened.

FERAL CATS CAN ALWAYS USE EXTRA SHELTER IN WINTER

You may be wondering how free-roaming cats can survive in cold weather. Even though these cats are at home outside, they can always use some extra help in cold or severe weather. Feral cats typically build a protective coat for winter, but the effectiveness of their fur as insulation is greatly reduced if it becomes wet or frozen and can often times result in hypothermia. They can get frostbite on their ears, nose and paws. They can die from exposure if protection is not available.

It's important to provide enough shelters for everyone in your colony. Some cats like to mingle; some prefer to have their own space.

A shelter doesn't need to be expensive or elaborate. There are many types of shelters that you can build or buy pre-made.

BEDDING

Shelter will be warmer and cozier if you put loose insulating material inside. The material must be dry and loose, so that the cats can burrow into and underneath it.

STRAW – NOT HAY – FOR SHELTERS

Straw and hay may look similar, but they're very different when it comes to insulating shelters.

Hay is used for animal feed—it draws and holds moisture, which you don't want in your cat shelter. Hay, because it's moist, can become moldy and some cats are reportedly allergic to hay and can develop nasal sores.

Straw, the dry leftover stalks from harvested crops, repels moisture, making it ideal for keeping cats and other animals warm and comfy all winter long. Straw resists the wet and keeps a shelter warm, and is the best choice for insulation and bedding. Straw is less prone to mold or rot, and does not carry risk of an allergic reaction by the cats.

OTHER BEDDING OPTIONS

Shredded newspaper will also work.

DO NOT USE folded newspaper, blankets, towels, carpeting, fake sheepskin, or any material that holds moisture. Cats can only lie on top of these materials so they actually draw out body heat and defeat the purpose by making the cat colder.

Some caregivers use Mylar thermal safety blankets as bedding. Mylar is a product that retains body heat. Mylar blankets are inexpensive and can be purchased at places like outdoor stores. Many local pet stores or Amazon have safe heating pads, heated water bowls and safe heat lamps.

SIZE

For shelters, size matters. A space just big enough for three to five cats is best.

Cats give each other body warmth and will huddle together in the cold. Keep shelters small for only a few cats. The shelter must trap cats' body heat to warm the shelter's interior. If shelter is too large, it will be difficult for the cat's body heat to keep the space warm.

A good shelter size is at least 2' x 3' and at least 18" high. Larger shelters are not necessarily better, since heat disperses quickly, leaving the inside as cold as the outside.

MAINTENANCE

Shelters should be checked regularly to ensure their optimum quality and function. You must change insulating materials such as straw regularly to ensure it and cats stay dry.

Don't forget to shovel shelters so cats don't get trapped inside (this includes barns, garages or other buildings). Keep entrances clear and shovel an exit for cats.

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The stores pay for it all. You never pay more. There are no added costs, obligations, or hidden fees. You don't need to enter any codes, notify the store, or iGive. It's all automatic! iGive takes care of the details, including sending the money you've helped raise directly to Feral Cat FOCUS. Your iGive account is totally free and private.

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Just send opt-out email to
rose@feralcatfocus.org.

SAVE THE DATE!!

FUSION
April 25, 2020
The Grapevine Banquets
333 Dick Road – Depew



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Please mail your donation to the address below or you can make an online credit card donation at www.feralcatfocus.org.

YES, I would like to donate \$_____ to Feral Cat FOCUS

_____ No Acknowledgement Needed

_____ I Would Like an Acknowledgement

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

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Feral Cat FOCUS is a registered nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. A copy of our latest annual report may be requested from us or from the Office of Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.