



Winter/Spring 2009

Mews & Views



Retooling our programs for 2009

Our spay/neuter work began in 2001 with our *Outdoor Cat Program* — developed along *Alley Cat Allies TNR* (trap-neuter-return) guidelines.

Background

We targeted rural and residential property owners who were already caring for naturally-occurring feral and stray cats — providing them with daily food, water and dry shelter. To ensure these cats could stay on the land, we funded their sterilization — stabilizing the immediate population by establishing known colonies of non-reproducing cats. These *kitten-free zones*—scattered throughout our service area—are an important tool in lowering the overall cat population—as 80% of all kittens are born to outdoor cats.

In 2004, our *Indoor Pet Cat Program* extended our spay/neuter umbrella to include cats living in lower-income families. These cats are the lynch pin of cat overpopulation — they're born outdoors to strays, then brought indoors as kittens, but — when their unsavory intact behaviors (spraying, yowling, kitting) get too much to handle — they're put back outdoors to live on their own (often pregnant) — or given to shelters where they are euthanized — *Michigan shelters collectively put down over 200 cats a day.*

But, after fixing over 12,000 cats, we're still scratching the surface. *The greater Washtenaw County area has about 60,000 unsterilized stray/feral cats and another 9,000 unsterilized pet cats.* As much as we'd like to fix *all of them* — their sheer numbers prevent this — instead we must focus only on those who can't be fixed otherwise — the changes in our 2009 programs reflect this goal:

2009 TLC Lower-Income Spay/Neuter Program

We no longer exclude residential outdoor cats from our lower-income program. So long as the household provides daily care (food, water and shelter) — and has a lifelong commitment to their cats — they can be living indoors or out at their home. This means in addition to property owners qualifying for outdoor cat vouchers through our *Feral Colony Assistance Program*, now renters, condo-

minium and mobile home residents can too — but this program has a 3-cat limit per household. Since these “porch” cats often move indoors after they're fixed, we don't ear-tip them. There's a \$25 voucher fee per cat.

2009 TLC Feral Colony Assistance Program.

By shifting porch cats to the *Lower Income Program*, we can now concentrate our outdoor program exclusively on helping caregivers sincerely dedicated to managing their property as kitten-free zones — *fixing all cats — male, female, friendly and feral — even if it requires live-trapping.* There's a \$100 colony registration fee and the application is a two-step process.

2009 TLC Service Area.

Many found our map-based service area confusing — as many boundary cities were only partially covered. In 2009 we are using a zip-code table to determine eligibility instead.

*We've included a poster on our spay-neuter service — if you pass a public bulletin board in any of our zip code areas, kindly post it to help us get the word out. **Complete program information and applications are on our web site.** If you don't live in our service area or meet the other program requirements, you may still be able to get affordable spay-neuters through other area programs. Visit our web site and click on our FAQs to find other ways to get help.*

2008 Participating Vet Clinics

Our special thanks to the clinics below, who each performed more than a dozen spay/neuters at discounted prices for our program during 2008. It is their availability and support that makes our program so successful. Most of the time we're able to send participants to clinics right in their immediate community—seldom more than 15 miles from their home. Without the help of these clinics, this would not be possible. Thank you!

Heritage Animal Hosp , Dundee	Salem Veterinary Service , Salem
Chelsea Animal Hosp , Chelsea	Tecumseh Animal Hosp , Tecumseh
Green Oak Veterinary , Whit Lake	Manchester Veterinary , Manchester
The Bridgewater Vet , Saline	Country Cat Clinic , Plymouth
Countryside Veterinary , Clinton	Milan Veterinary Clinic , Milan
Lane Animal Hospital , Chelsea	Whittaker Rd Animal Clinic , Ypsilanti
Main Veterinary , Adrian	Companion Animal Clinic , Tecumseh
Brookside Veterinary , Ann Arbor	Brighton Animal Hospital , Brighton
Saline Veterinary , Saline	Kelly Veterinary Clinic , Adrian
Easthaven Animal Clinic , Ann Arbor	Village Animal Clinic , Dexter
Adrian Animal Clinic , Adrian	Home Health Care for Pets , Whit Lake
Grass Lake Animal Hospital	Lyon Veterinary Clinic , South Lyon
Affordable Vet , Ann Arbor	Columbia Animal Clinic , Brooklyn
Ypsilanti Animal Clinic , Ypsilanti	VCA Woodland , Ann Arbor
MI Ave Animal Hosp , Ypsilanti	Dundee Veterinary Clinic , Dundee
	Towne & Country Animal Hospital , Brighton



Zimmer Foundation
 TLC/For The Love of Cats
 PO Box 130944
 Ann Arbor MI 48113
 734.663.8000
 TLConline.org

Feeding Outdoor Cats?

Feeding outdoor cats is a good thing to do — if you're also prepared to sterilize them. Through a daily meal-feeding routine (*not* free-feeding) you can identify all the cats living on your property and train them to come at the same time each day — and be hungry when they show. Once you've identified the cats you can get them fixed. Live-trapping for surgery is simple once their eating routines are established.

Feeding Tips

- Feed at the same time each day — *every day* — in the daylight (year-round)
- Feed only the amount the cats can eat in 20-30 minutes — and promptly remove any excess.
- Feed in an area that both you and the cats can access — even during the winter months.



2009 Spay/Neuter Programs At A Glance

	Program Requirements	Lower-Income	Feral Colony
Applicant Requirements	Minimum Age	18	21
	Total Household Annual Income	< \$40,000	N/A
	Property Owner	N/A	Yes
	Live in Service Area	Yes	Yes
	Commitment to keep cat	Lifetime	Lifetime
	Provide proof of income	Yes	N/A
Cat Requirements	Provide Proof of Residency	Yes	Yes
	Minimum Age	12 wks	12 wks
	Minimum Time w/Applicant	4 wks	10 days
	Indoor-living cat	Yes	No
	Outdoor-living cat	Yes	Yes
	Declawing permitted	No	No
	Ear-tipping left ear required	No	Yes
Lives on same land as applicant	Yes	Yes	

2009 Service Area by Zip Code

If your home zip code is in this table, you live in our area		
48103 Ann Arbor	48159 Maybee	48197 Ypsilanti
48104 Ann Arbor	48160 Milan	48198 Ypsilanti
48105 Ann Arbor	48165 New Hudson	49221 Adrian
48108 Ann Arbor	48167 Northville	49229 Britton
48110 Azalia	48168 Northville	49230 Brooklyn
48111 Belleville	48169 Pinckney	49236 Clinton
48114 Brighton	48170 Plymouth	49238 Deerfield
48116 Brighton	48175 Salem	49240 Grass Lake
48118 Chelsea	48176 Saline	49263 Norvell
48130 Dexter	48178 South Lyon	49265 Onsted
48131 Dundee	48189 Whit Lake	49270 Petersburg
48137 Gregory	48190 Whittaker	49286 Tecumseh
48140 Ida	48191 Willis	49287 Tipton
48158 Manchester		

Dear Friends,

Many homeowners inquiring about our spay/neuter service begin by explaining that *"they live in the country where cats are constantly being dropped off"*. We're not aware of any hard statistics on this, but we hear it often enough to believe it happens. *Why* it happens is conjecture, but the cats do have something in common — *virtually none are neutered*. So the *"why"* may have something to do with the dilemma people face when *they can't afford to fix their cats and can no longer live with them unfixed*. Given the choice between a shelter, where the cats will likely be killed, or a country home, where they might be cared for, the choice isn't as clear as many would think.

A puzzling (and troubling) attribute of homeowners seeking spay/neuter help for these cats is that they almost always wait until after the "drop offs" have had one or more litters. When we receive a list of their cats — only a minority (10-20%) are *true* strays — the rest are preventable cats born under their care. It's a shame that it takes the birth of kittens for many caregivers to see the urgency in preventing these births. **Over 75,000 cats are killed in Michigan shelters each year — one every 7 minutes — day and night — weekdays and weekends — making healthy-but-homeless cat euthanasia the leading cause of cat death in Michigan.** Building more or larger shelters won't reduce the number of cats killed each year — only pro-active community-wide spay/neuter will. That is why we work in this area — and are pleased to find a growing number of caregivers understanding the urgency — and likewise a growing number of other organizations.

Kitty Zimmer