

Cat Over-population Emergency in Ottawa

Currently, in a small area of downtown Ottawa, there is an animal welfare emergency needing your assistance. There are almost 40 homeless cats within less than a square block, and over a hundred animals within a two-street radius.

This tragic situation is the result of human irresponsibility and neglect. Unfortunately some pet owners discard their cats, while others do not spay or neuter theirs. The group of approximately 40 cats is composed mostly of young cats and kittens. If nothing is done to address this situation, soon there will be many more homeless cats that are vulnerable to disease, abuse, accidents and premature death.

In addition to the undue suffering of these animals and the transmission of disease through interbreeding, the impact of a large cat population within a small urban area can be significant on the local flora and fauna. With no other food source available to these cats, bird and insect populations can become extinct in a shorter timeframe.

Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue (HHCR), a volunteer-run cat rescue group in Ottawa, is attempting to address the situation. At the very least, its goal is to have all of these cats spayed/neutered, vaccinated and illnesses/injuries treated to stop this burgeoning emergency. Ideally, the cats would then be placed in suitable permanent or foster homes.

"If nothing is done now, there will be 400+ cats instead of the 40+ cats" says Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue founder Valerie Froud. "Ideally we would like to find homes for as many of these cats as possible. We definitely need community assistance with this community problem."

Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue is completely community-based, volunteer driven and receives no government funding. It relies solely on volunteers and donations from kind individuals who care. Since its creation in 2009, HHCR has rescued over 100 cats. These rescues have all been spayed/neutered, had their injuries/illnesses treated, adopted to forever homes, or placed in foster homes until a permanent home can be found for them.

"People need to be educated on the impact of their selfish decisions by not sterilizing their cats, and/or then disposing of them outside. These 40+ starving, malnourished, injured babies who are not equipped to survive the imminent cold Ottawa winter, are the results of these cruel actions," says Froud.

HHCR's work with this group of approximately 40+ cats has already started:

- Orphan Annie, Oliver and Otis, the three-week old malnourished, hairless, motherless sick kittens were brought inside, bottle-fed, de-wormed and put on antibiotics for their illness. They are now happily recovering in a responsible and caring foster home.
- Star, a tiny black young kitten (whose own two kittens recently died outside), had her badly cut front paw stitched up and was spayed and vaccinated. She is recovering from her injuries and being cared for within a kind and loving foster home.
- Reddy, a young male orange cat, was neutered and vaccinated, and re-released outside because there was nowhere else for him to go.

- Automne, a thin starving young tortoise-shell female and her three two-week old kittens (Printemps, Ete and Hiver), was brought inside just in time before the cold weather hit.

Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue would like to find homes for as many of these cats as possible and is asking for community involvement in donating / providing the following:

- ceramic dishes and bowls
- healthy wet and dry cat food
- towels, sheets, cat beds
- cat carriers to transport the cat to and from the vet
- large dog crates to temporarily house the cats
- a room in someone's home to keep a cat overnight before going to the vet
- a room in someone's home for up to two weeks – to allow the cat to recuperate from surgery prior to being re-released outside
- fosters and adopters of these young cats and kittens – to give them a chance at a healthy and happy life off the streets
- drivers to transport the cats to and from the vet
- financial donations to help with vet costs

The long, cold winter is fast approaching. Please help stem the cycle of misery and help Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue help these cats. Peter Harper, a concerned citizen who volunteers with HHCR, would like to remind people that “animals are not disposable.”

Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue can be contacted by phone at **613-231-6839**.

By email at: **hungryandhomeless.ottawa@gmail.com**.

Further information is available at: **www.hungryandhomelesscatrescue.com**

