

Two Paws Up For Free Spay/Neuter Clinic

Warm and fuzzy they're not. But the 29 feral and stray cats treated at FeralCare's second free spay/neuter clinic got a paw up to becoming better "community citizens" just the same.

Held at Cannondale Animal Clinic in Wilton, an all-volunteer crew of veterinarians, vet techs and helpers sterilized and vaccinated cats from neighboring towns and as far away as Torrington. Once neutered, the feral cats continue to keep rodent populations under control but no longer exhibit undesirable yowling, straying and fighting. By significantly reducing the number of feral kittens born, the competition for adoption with other cats — in already overcrowded animal shelters and overburdened rescue groups — is addressed at the most basic level.

FeralCare, a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to aiding cats and communities through no-cost spay/neuter clinics and informative outreach, expects to track a gradual decline in feral cat colonies as additional spay/neuter clinics are implemented.

60 cats are scheduled for the next FeralCare Clinic, to be held on Sunday, October 7 at Cannondale Animal Clinic, 485 Danbury Road, Wilton. Veterinarian Paula Belknap will again donate her services and clinic space for the event. More than 25 vet techs and volunteers will participate.

"Dr Belknap and Cannondale Animal Clinic are incredible," raves FeralCare co-founder Lisa Richards. "She [Belknap] has already made a huge difference for people and animals of the community. You get the advantage of a top-class surgeon plus the compassion of someone who really cares about the animals. She takes the same time to help and advise a feral cat caretaker as she does a client with a pedigreed pet."

Belknap, who has practiced in Wilton for over 12 years, advocates pet owner education and community awareness. "Animals are everyone's responsibility," stresses Belknap. "By ignoring a problem it just doesn't go away. You have to do something proactive to make any real change."

By offering the first, totally free spay/neuter clinics in Connecticut, FeralCare has enabled the sterilization of more than 350 cats since the group's inception in late 2006. Designed for feral, stray and low-income-owned cats, their humans may schedule clinic spaces by calling 203-362-9440

or emailing info@FeralCare.com. Spaces are allocated on a first come/first serve basis for animals meeting spay/neuter requirements (healthy, over four pounds, unowned or low-income-owned cats).

Low cost spay/neuter opportunities are also available through T.A.I.L.S. — The Alliance In Limiting Strays— of Norwalk (www.tails-ct.org), which offers canine spay/neuters as well.

"By acting as a community resource we can serve a much greater population than just animal lovers," emphasizes FeralCare co-founder Clara Nolan. "Animals that would not otherwise be neutered due to their unowned nature or the financial constraints of some pet owners get quality care and can no longer reproduce. This helps the community by gradually reducing feral cat populations and vaccinating the animals is an added health benefit. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to help people that sometimes have to choose between feeding their animals or taking them to the veterinarian."

Those interested in participating at a FeralCare clinic, to make a donation or to learn more about the organization should email info@FeralCare.com or visit them online at www.FeralCare.com ■



FeralCare provides FREE Spay/Neuter services to low-income families unable to afford to sterilize and vaccinate pet cats, and to trappers and caretakers of cat colonies or strays. By significantly reducing the number of feral and stray kittens born, fewer animals require care and fewer are euthanized, saving taxpayers and animals alike!