



[ccspca.org](http://ccspca.org)

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To: All municipal governments

Please take a few minutes to read about the Chester County SPCA's new Community Cat Program.

The Chester County SPCA's goal is to raise awareness about the thousands of community cats living outdoors throughout Chester and Delaware Counties and provide services to assist by undertaking a TNR project to humanely reduce the number of community cats and improve the plight of those cats currently living outdoors.

Tens of thousands of free-roaming cats live in the backyards, alleyways, vacant lots, and other outdoor spaces of Chester and Delaware counties. Some of the cats are strays – former “house cats” that have become lost or were abandoned. But the vast majority of the free-roaming cats are wild, or “feral” – not socialized to humans. Feral cats are the offspring of lost or abandoned pet cats. Born outdoors and having lived with little or no human contact, they are very wary of people and have learned to survive in whatever place they call home – whether it's your backyard or an industrial park.

Two unneutered stray or feral cats can quickly reproduce at an alarming rate. A large “colony” of cats can quickly grow where only the first two cats originally made their home. From as early as six months old, each new female born into the expanding colony will give birth to two or more litters of kittens each year. Spaying just one female community cat can prevent the births of more than 57 kittens over the next two years.

TNR is the only humane and proven-effective method to control and eventually reduce stray and feral cat overpopulation. During a TNR project, cats are trapped, spayed (females) or neutered (males), vaccinated, surgically and painlessly ear-tipped on the left ear for identification, and returned to their area where caretakers provide them with food, shelter and, when needed, medical care. Young kittens and friendly cats may be taken in for adoption. TNR performed consistently in a neighborhood has the potential to reduce intake at shelters and, consequently, to reduce euthanasia rates. TNR is effective and humane, unlike traditional trap-and-kill or trap-and-remove. Both trap-and-kill and trap-and-remove result in the “vacuum effect”– when new, unaltered and unvaccinated cats move into the emptied area and breed with no caretaker to

monitor the cats over the long term. A TNR'd colony defends its food source, keeping unneutered and unvaccinated cats out of its territory and preventing any new births in that "managed" colony.

The presence of community cats is not inherently of any health risk to humans, but there are humane ways to discourage cats from entering a particular yard or area.

The Chester County SPCA in collaboration with PetSmart Charities, has received a grant, which will be used to fund the TNR initiative for the next two years. This grant has allowed the Chester County SPCA to employ a Community Cat Coordinator, which with the many years' experience specific to TNR, will manage the program and also help in providing education and assisting caretakers in maintaining cat colonies.

Presently, with all animal control contracts, the Chester County SPCA's Animal Protective Services Division invoices an animal acquisition fee of \$100 for full and \$200 for limited contracted municipalities. For the duration of the grant, the Chester County SPCA will be waiving all fees for any stray cats received that have been part of a TNR program with the nationally recognized left ear tipped. These cats will be immediately returned to the area to which they were found and reunited with their colony. In doing so, saving contracted municipalities' money and reducing the financial responsibility.

If you should have any questions about our Community Cat initiative, please feel free to contact me.

On behalf of the Chester County SPCA, I thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Lamb', written in a cursive style.

Adam Lamb  
Executive Director