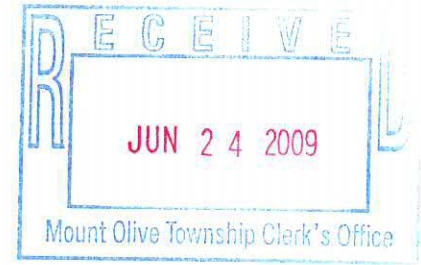


**The Volunteer Auxiliary
For
Animal Shelters, Inc.**



Dear Council Members,

June 20, 2009


It has come to my attention that you are considering a trap, neuter and return program in your town of Mount Olive. I am a volunteer and past president of the Volunteer Auxiliary for Animal Shelters Inc at the Ocean County Animal Shelter. For the past 10 years I have watched animal control officers from 13 municipalities bring cats into the shelter, many have come in traps and have been labeled as feral. All of these feral cats have been euthanized on the 8th day, many of their kittens have been socialized, altered and adopted. This practice of trap and euthanize has not changed the feral cat population, if anything our numbers have increased over the past few years. Presently we have 48 cages in our holding area, full to capacity, over 50% with feral cats.

Most recently I have contacted Jackson and Manchester Township regarding a TNR program. In Ocean County, each town is charged approximately \$90 to hold and euthanize a feral cat. Jackson spends over 2/3 of it's animal control budget euthanizing feral cats. In this time of "budget tightening" many municipalities are looking for ways to involve the community and pull on resources other than tax dollars. TNR has been very attractive to these towns. TNR is a program that can be privately funded, municipality funded or a little of both. Jackson Township has most recently adopted a TNR policy that incorporates both private and municipal funding. Point Pleasant Beach passed a TNR initiative in October; we have not received any cats from that town since the passing.

Animal control officers in both towns, Jackson and Manchester, support TNR programs. Both of these officers have offered to work with the municipality and a volunteer group to decrease trap and euthanize. They both see the value in offering the option for community members to maintain a managed free-roaming cat population. Notice I say option and managed, TNR is designed to benefit both animals and humans, the ACOs play an important part in this program. TNR expands their job to animal rescue and care; it enables the town's people to view them in a much more favorable light.

Please consider visiting both the shelter and a colony of managed feral cats, you will see that to live outside with a caregiver is much more humane and fiscally sound than to be trapped, maintained for 7 days and euthanized. Please make TNR an option for your town and join over 100 towns in New Jersey who see this as a viable solution to a never ending issue.

Thank you,


Susan Shannon
Board Member Volunteer Auxiliary for Animal Shelters Inc.