



Our Mission

Shadow Cats will respect and show compassion to all animals. We will improve the lives of abused, abandoned, feral, stray, and injured cats. We will promote spay and neuter programs, promote Trap, Neuter and Return as the most humane method of effecting positive change in feral cat populations, provide educational and informational assistance to the public, re-home socialized cats and kittens and provide medical care to those cats under Shadow Cats guardianship.

About Us

Shadow Cats is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the welfare of feral, homeless, ill and injured cats. We have spayed and neutered over 3,000 cats and provide hospice and long term care to ill and injured cats and to cats that have behavioral problems at our Sanctuary. To date, over 200 cats have passed through the Sanctuary doors and lived out their lives in peace since 1997. In addition, we have found adoptive homes for over 500 cats and kittens.

Shadow Cats gained its' non profit status in February 2004 but long before that we were trapping cats and taking them in for sterilization and vaccinations. As early as 1997, our volunteers were setting out traps, socializing kittens and adopting into homes any social kittens or cats we could. While we know some free roaming cats do exhibit feral behavior and may prefer the outdoor life, we believed then and still do, that cats that could be rehomed with safe, loving families certainly deserved our efforts to do so.

In addition to our TNR program, Shadow Cats cares for over 90 cats at our Sanctuary. The Sanctuary has evolved over time and grown with the needs of the cats. These are cats that have a multitude of medical issues. We also have behaviorally challenged cats that are still recovering from the emotional scars of abuse and hoarding situations. All are under veterinary supervision, cared for on a daily basis and live cage free in an enriched environment.

In 2004 we opened a small shelter for cats in order to facilitate our adoption efforts. However, the continual abandonment of cats on our steps created such a great financial burden; we were forced to close our doors in 2007. All of the cats were either adopted, transferred in an exchange with Best Friends Animal Society or came to the Sanctuary until they were adopted.

We actively participate in community programs and efforts to reduce the cat overpopulation and are recognized for our efforts. We work with both local and national organizations.

In 2007, on behalf of Shadow Cats, we accepted the annual Guardian Award from the Austin Humane Society in recognition of the humane work our organization does in the community.

Also in November 2007, Shadow Cats worked diligently with the city of Round Rock to implement a new ordinance that allowed Trap, Neuter and Return to become an accepted and legal alternative to trap and kill. Again in 2009, working with the city of Taylor, Shadow Cats was instrumental in changing ordinances to legalize TNR.

In 2008, we worked with Best Friends Animal Society, a nationally recognized animal welfare organization to provide sanctuary to 17 cats rescued from a hoarding situation in Pahrump, NV. In exchange, we sent 24 adoptable cats to Best Friends. Previous to this, we participated in two other major rescues and have responded to multiple individual calls for help.

We strive each day to make life better for the animals in our care, to intervene on as many homeless/feral cat situations as we can and to ultimately improve the lives of the cats we share our community with. We will continue to maintain the highest standards, look to the future and provide for the cats in our care.

Our Board of Directors

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Sheila Smith

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Leticia Stivers

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Linda Crossman

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At A Glance: What We Do

1. Sanctuary Cats

- a. Feline Leukemia Cats
- b. Hospice Care

2. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)

- a. Feral/Free-Roaming/Community Cats
- b. Medical intervention & Care
- c. Support of Central Texas Cat Hospital and the Austin Humane Society

3. Education

- a. Spay/Neuter
- b. TNR
- c. Abuse and Hoarding Awareness

4. Community Involvement & Advocacy

- a. Ordinance Changes
- b. Mass and Individual TNR Trapping for Seniors



Friday, November 23, 2007

Feral and sterile City Council legalizes Trap-Neuter-Release programs for cats

KATHRYN EAKENS

Leader Staff

Friday, November 23, 2007

Without human contact, abandoned cats revert to a feral - or undomesticated - state, band together in groups called colonies and begin to reproduce, contributing to feline overpopulation. According to the Austin Feral Cats organization, two reproducing feral cats can become 12,000 in just five years.

As a result of a city council vote Thursday, Shadow Cats and Street Cat Rescue - two Round Rock organizations - will now be able to lawfully implement Trap-Neuter-Return programs to help reduce the number of feral cats in the city.

Council members voted unanimously for the Restraint of Animals ordinance - which makes it unlawful for any animal to be at large within the city limits - to provide a defense to prosecution if the animal is a feral cat participating in a Trap-Neuter-Return program approved by the city.

In the increasingly popular alternative to extermination, feral cats are sterilized, vaccinated and returned to their habitat. The cats then resume their regular routine without adding to the population while volunteers continue to care for and monitor the colony.

"We've been doing this quietly for 10 years and now we are really hoping with the blessing of the city this can be something that truly makes a difference in the number of feral cats and shelter intake," Sheila Smith, founder of Shadow Cats, said.

According to a study by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the majority of the nation's thousands of TNR programs have been in place for only a few years. However, the results of those programs have been positive enough for the association - and several state veterinary associations - to endorse the practice.

"A comprehensive, long-term program of neutering followed by adoption or return to the resident colony can result in reduction of free roaming cat populations in urban areas," the association's website states.

Currently only a change in ordinance, Chief of Police Tim Ryle also gave a presentation to the council on a proposed program where the two organizations will work together with Animal Control to address the city's feral cat population. The program will have several requirements including that colony managers be part of a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and provide

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www.shadowcats.net

animal control with records detailing colony locations, numbers and records of vaccinations and sterilizations.

"Cats must be microchipped and vaccinated before being returned to their original habitat only after being certified safe by a veterinarian," said Ryle. "Microchipping will provide the hard data to show how the program is affecting the feral cat population."

Also under the proposed program those cats deemed a nuisance by animal control must be moved to the Williamson County Animal Shelter or relocated outside the city limits and cats from other cities may not be relocated into Round Rock. The program is also subject to an annual review by the council.

"Once people see the effects of TNR it seems to change any negative views of feral cats. I have known people who initially hated the idea, later thanking me," Donna Powell, founder of Street Cat Rescue, said. "Male cats quit fighting, mating, roaming and spraying - female cats quit reproducing. Allowing TNR programs will benefit Round Rock and you will see a reduction in shelter cat intake and citizen complaints."

Smith and her husband, Dr. Roy Brenton Smith - veterinarian at the Central Texas Cat Hospital in Round Rock - called the vote and proposed program "unprecedented" and a great representation of the city's progressive leadership.

"We are so fortunate to have Chief Ryle, Animal Control and the city of Round Rock on our side," Dr. Smith said.

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For Immediate Release
January 2010

Shadow Cats Instrumental in New Animal Ordinance

TAYLOR, TEXAS - The Taylor City Council passed a landmark ordinance making TNR (trap, neuter and return) legal in this small town east of Austin and Round Rock. This is the result of six months of coordinated effort by many dedicated people, initiated by an email alert from a concerned citizen, Suzy Swingle, and led by Shadow Cats volunteer Dawn Shepherd.

What began as a result of issues encountered trying to help community cats, led to an awareness of outdated and inhumane practices including gas euthanasia of unwanted animals. But a public outcry led to a caring and thoughtful response from city officials in Taylor. Police Chief Jeff Straub was the catalyst of change in this small Central Texas community - he dealt with a wide array of complaints and charges, gathered ideas and suggestions from throughout the community and surrounding towns and cities, and worked to implement the best of those ideas in Taylor in a way that benefited both the animals and citizens of the community. He immediately ordered the dismantling of the gas chamber that had long been in use, and worked to improve all aspects of the city's animal control operations.

Shadow Cats Rescue was instrumental in helping create this change in Taylor. Dawn Shepherd spearheaded our efforts, and other volunteers helped to meet with the police chief and animal control officers to help the city develop and implement more effective and humane practices. Dawn established the Taylor Animal Welfare Committee (TAWC) and since its creation no feral or community cat has been euthanized - all have been sterilized, vaccinated and released back into their environment through TNR programs. TAWC has worked diligently to educate Taylor home and land owners about the benefits of TNR programs. Grassroots efforts resulted in an outpouring of community concern expressed to the city council and provided the impetus and support for them to write the TNR ordinance which was voted into law on January 14, 2010.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Taylor shelter, or in either fostering or adopting a dog or cat, can contact them at (512) 352-5551 or visit their website at <http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us>. They are located at 600 East 4th Street in Taylor. Anyone interested in participating in the TNR program to help make a difference in Taylor and surrounding communities can contact us at feralfriend@austin.rr.com.

ABOUT SHADOWCATS

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For Immediate Release
January 2010

Shadow Cats Help Elderly Woman Spay/Neuter 35 Cats

LEANDER, TEXAS - Shadow Cats was contacted to assist a senior citizen who was feeding dozens of cats and needed help to spay and neuter before the spring population explosion of kittens. Cindy Beyeler, a Shadow Cats volunteer, coordinated a group of volunteers to trap as many of the cats as possible at one time.

Volunteers fed them, tagged them and completed their paperwork prior to surgery the following morning. Thanks to the Austin Humane Society's Feral Cat Program, all cats would be spayed, neutered and receive their rabies vaccine at no charge.

A few cats had minor health issues which were successfully treated and all 35 cats were released back into their home area, feral and sterile. The owner/caretaker was very appreciative that Shadow Cats volunteers responded to her need.

Ms. Beyeler commented, "This TNR project taught me that teamwork is inspiring. Having team players makes the load so much lighter and when everyone knows what role they play, success is the outcome. The energy and excitement of everyone involved was awesome. Our Shadow Cats trappers gave each other high-fives and the electricity in the air was definitely catching - an incredible feeling! It spurs you on to want to do more and continue to be a part in helping the stray, homeless and feral cats in our community - the mission of Shadow Cats Rescue."

With a newly expanded crew of volunteer trappers, Shadow Cats will be able to respond to situations like this where a coordinated group effort can have such a tremendous impact in a very short time. If the public would like to volunteer at Shadow Cats or train to become a volunteer trapper, please visit their website at www.shadowcats.net

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Testimonials



I just want to put in writing how grateful I am for the help that Shadow Cats gave me with the feral cats my elderly mother in Round Rock was caring for. When she fell and was transferred to a nursing facility, Sheila helped me capture and arranged transportation of the cats all the way to Houston to a new home. Without the help of organizations like this I don't know what I would have done. Their unselfish service to animals in need is much appreciated.

--Bob C.

Austin, Texas

I was impressed and relieved to receive services for a feral cat I was trying to spay and help feed in my neighborhood. She became pregnant before I could trap her, so I was hoping to avoid the situation again. Thanks for providing this assistance in caring for her.

--Maria K.

Round Rock, Texas

I just wanted to thank your organization for the wonderful job they did taking care of the feral cat and kittens that we found in our backyard shed. Dawn was such a wonderful lady to come out several times to try to trap the cats. We totally appreciate your organization and what it does for our community. I am trying to educate neighbors about your organization. God bless you and Dawn for providing this service. Dawn was very professional and kind every time she was out here.

--Melanie J.

Round Rock, Texas

Thank you for your quick and informative response. I was able to reach Molly who came over with 6 traps last evening. Three adults and three kittens were caught between 10pm and 1am. They are all currently at the Austin Humane Society, getting ready for their surgeries.

...thank you for having put together a web page filled with information about how to handle stray cats humanely. Kudos to all who have the passion and patience to make this community a better place.

--Terry M.

Austin, Texas

"Shadow Cats is an incredible organization and has helped me resolve my 'feral cat' issue with a wonderful outcome. Thank you so much for all your great work and your compassionate hearts!"

--Betty B.

Round Rock, Texas

"...I felt like I was up against a brick wall. Too many outside cats and I didn't know how to help them and then my vet told me about Shadow Cats. Your volunteers came out and helped us get everyone spayed. Now months later, all the cats are fixed and me and my neighbors are much happier. You all made a difference in our neighborhood and we can not say enough about all the good Shadow Cats does for the cats and for us too..."

--*Deanna B.*

Round Rock, Texas

These folks are tireless in their efforts to give feral cats a chance for survival though their Trap, Neuter, and Return program. They provide medical care for injured ferals. They provide food for feral colonies. The work they do for the ferals comes from their hearts. I have supported them for years, and will continue to do so. They receive no compensation from the government, but yet they perform a service valuable to us all, as well as the ferals. They have a commitment to the community that too often goes unnoticed.

I cannot thank them enough for their commitment to making life a little better for the ferals and abandoned animals that too often humans discard because they become an "inconvenience". I highly recommend supporting these folks, even if not financially, at least a "thank you". Their hearts are as big as our State, perhaps even bigger.

--*David B.*

Volente, Texas

I became aware of your organization recently and enlisted help to care for a little colony of feral cats who have lived in my neighborhood for several years. Over the years the group has grown and two of them "adopted me" last fall. These two starving, bedraggled little animals clearly needed help, and I knew it would only be a matter of time and the group would be growing again. In researching what to I could for feral cats in the area I called the Williamson County Humane Society to ask about possibly borrowing the humane traps to take these guys to my personal vet for care. I was told they couldn't lend traps for such a purpose, but that I should contact an organization called Shadow Cats, who dealt with this type of situation.

This group was exactly what I needed! Their volunteer came out to my house and in one evening we had all four cats in traps and on their way to the Austin shelter where they were to receive free neutering and shots. It turned out we had three males and one pregnant, and still in heat, female to treat. The little female went for care at the Central Texas Cat Hospital and was taken care of there for several days before she came home. The males were back home within 24 hours and I can report today that everybody is doing well. Thriving. I owe this fact to the wonderful help and care they received from the Shadow Cats organization.

I cannot stress enough what a blessing Shadow Cats has been to us in this neighborhood. Thanks to them I know these cats have a fighting chance at health and most importantly, we will have no more unwanted litters to starve to death fending for themselves. Thank you, thank you!

--*Jayne W.*

Round Rock, Texas