



Best Friends Catnippers

Overview and Key Facts

Who We Are Best Friends Catnippers is an outreach program of the Best Friends Animal Society of Kanab, Utah, which operates the nation's largest no-kill shelter for domestic animals. We are a non-profit organization completely funded by donations and volunteer services, dedicated to humanely reducing the population of homeless and stray feral cats in Los Angeles county through a free trap-neuter-return program. Since inception (late 1999) our operations have sterilized approximately 3,000 cats, preventing millions of homeless cats from coming into the population. Check out Catnippers under our own website www.catnippers.org or LA Outreach Programs at www.bestfriends.org.

Contact Information

- P.O. Box 55663, Sherman Oaks, California 91403-5663
- **Telephone: (818) 377-9700**
- e-mail: catnippers@bestfriends.org

Feral Cats Feral cats are the offspring of stray or abandoned pets, raised without human contact and living typically in colonies where food and shelter are available. They lead harsh lives, shortened by malnutrition, disease, trauma, and high kitten mortality. Feral cats are often seen as a public nuisance and make up a large portion of the animals euthanized by local control agencies.

Trap-Neuter-Return Euthanasia has proven to be ineffective in controlling feral populations because the remaining animals reproduce more to fill the territory vacated by those euthanized. It is also not effective from a cost standpoint, consuming far greater resources than the TNR approach. The best solution is known as trap-neuter-return (TNR), a community-based approach that involves humanely trapping feral cats, transporting them to a spay/neuter clinic, and then returning them to their colonies where they are looked after and fed by caregivers.

Program Elements Since 1999 we have conducted free, high-volume spay & neuter clinics at donated veterinary facilities. During 2004, 6 clinics will be held in January, March, May, July, September and November. In addition, subject to funding levels, Catnippers offers coupons which caregivers can use to pay for spay-neuter services through vets that participate in our program. Also, Best Friends Catnippers was the first organization in Los Angeles invited to distribute the City's new \$20 feral cat discount vouchers, which we offer to caregivers as well.

Clinics Caregivers are directed to bring trapped ferals to the clinics for check-in between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. The cats are anesthetized by experienced technicians while in the traps, then checked for general health and special needs and transported to surgery. After surgery, each animal is de-wormed with Droncit and administered vaccinations (Rabies & FVRCP), penicillin and other medications as may be necessary, given a complete flea treatment with Revolution, and groomed. Also one ear is tipped to show the cat has been altered. Intensive care is provided as necessary. There is no charge to caregivers.

Coupon and Voucher Programs We have recruited a number of vet practices to participate in our Catnippers Coupon Program, and this number is expanding all the time. Each participating vet agrees to perform all of the same services Catnippers offers at clinics in exchange for payment of the face amount of our coupons. Except for unusual circumstances, there is no charge to caregivers. These coupons are offered as funding permits. In addition, Catnippers will continue to offer caregivers the new City of Los Angeles Feral Cat Vouchers, to residents and cats located in the city. These are redeemable for \$20 toward the cost of spay/neuter services performed by City-approved participating vets.

Caregiver Initiatives Best Friends Catnippers is engaged in an on-going community effort to access feral cat caregivers and to promote the availability of our free TNR services among this group of caring individuals. Toward this end, we serve as an information resource for individuals and companies interested in implementing a TNR program, and in trapping and transporting feral cats to our clinics. We are knowledgeable about other spay-neuter services for feral cats, and, because our resources are limited, we often refer caregivers to one of these alternatives. We are also very active in providing our services to large corporations, college campuses and similar institutional sites, and regularly make presentations to such organizations concerning the advantages and benefits of TNR.

Costs and Needs Our complete range of services is made available at no cost to caregivers of feral cats, thanks in part to the clinics, veterinarians, technicians and other volunteers who generously contribute their time and resources. However, clinic supplies are expensive, and our coupon program is entirely dependent upon available cash. To satisfy these needs, we depend upon donations from organizations and the public. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.