

2008
ANNUAL
REPORT





If we treated everyone we meet with the same affection we bestow upon our favorite cat, they, too, would purr.
- Martin Buxbaum

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Letter from the President

This has been another amazing year at the MRFERS. Each year I continue to be impressed by the dedication of our volunteers and staff in assisting the many cats and kittens in our region that need our assistance. During the past year we have introduced several new programs. In 2007 we launched our SpayMASS Hotline, committed to purchasing a high volume

spay/neuter vehicle, established a Bridge Program and Care For Life Program. In addition to our expanding programs we have also focused our efforts to increase the impact of our current programs. Our Feral Program continues to be a model of success for others across the country, our Adoption Program has embraced the concept of "Open Adoptions" and is sending more kitties into loving homes, our Sunday spay/neuter clinics for Feral Cats continue to provide this free service for feral cats, and our Danville Sanctuary is a tremendously peaceful place for special needs and feral kitties that are awaiting barn homes. All of our programs have touched cats in over 60 communities.

We continue to reach and hope that one day we will be living in a state where any cat in need can get help when needed. Right now we are achieving this goal in our eight service area towns, but we need to work hard to assist others and help them believe that this is possible.

Our work is far from over, but we are making a difference and that is due to your continued support. As a donor or volunteer of the MRFERS you are enabling our nationally recognized efforts. Let's continue the success into 2008-2009. Thank you again for contributing to the MRFERS, the organization that cares for cats in need.

Sincerely

Stacy LeBaron
MRFERS President



Letter from Director of Operations

Greetings all,

This summer marks my one-year anniversary as MRFERS's Director of Operations, and while it has been an extremely hectic summer, I am pleased to say that the last year was a success—and that I feel we are poised to make some incredible strides forward in the upcoming year! We have a truly incredible team of people supporting our mission here at MRFERS, including a remarkably dedicated staff who put in long hours and lots of heart. I am honored to work with these folks every day to improve the quality of life for as many cats as we can, and I can assure every one of you that your donations to MRFERS go directly toward helping cats.

MRFERS has now placed over 15,500 cats since our inception, and we have spayed/neutered over 8000 feral cats and cats owned by low-income families. We hope to increase the latter figure vastly once our new mobile spay/neuter clinic hits the road this fall! This venture is something that the staff is incredibly excited about, and we hope that the entire MRFERS community—and the community at large—will join us in our excitement. This mobile clinic will allow us to travel to areas under-served by low-cost spay/neuter programs, and will allow us to provide spay/neuter and other medical services for all of our shelter cats. This is a huge step for MRFERS, and a huge step towards reducing cat overpopulation.

MRFERS focuses on its service area towns when taking cats into our adoption program, but we are also proud to be able to help other organizations and rescuers with their cat and kitten overflow when we have room, and to offer our feral spay/neuter clinics to anyone. This past year alone, we were able to assist cats from 53 towns and 10 different organizations through our adoption program alone—and programs like the mobile clinic will allow us to expand our reach even farther.

We can't continue to expand our programs without help from our supporters, however, and I hope that we can continue to count on your support as we forge ahead into new and exciting territory this coming year!

On behalf on the kitties, thank you!

Sincerely

Liz Pease
MRFERS Director of Operations

PROGRAMS AND SUCCESS STORIES



Doris, a volunteer adoption counselor helps find the right cat for a visitor.

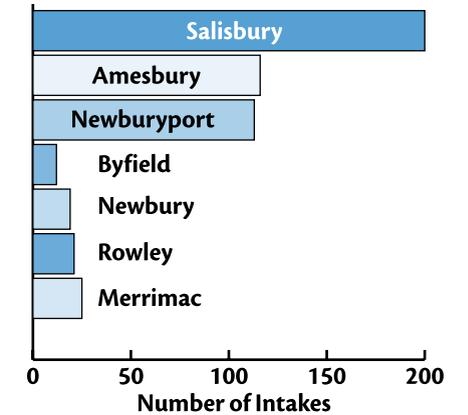
Adoption Program

This program has been very busy. During this past year we have assisted 975 cats and kittens in this program. Some of our highlights for the year were the adoptions of Boo, Onyx, Lucy, and Abraham. Both adoption centers (at PetSmart in Danvers and at our headquarters in Salisbury) have been extremely busy with a core group of great staff and volunteers.

We held three adoptathon events. In March we took in 52 cats (known as the "fish cats"), and were able to find homes for most of these cats within a few months. Our foster homes continue to do

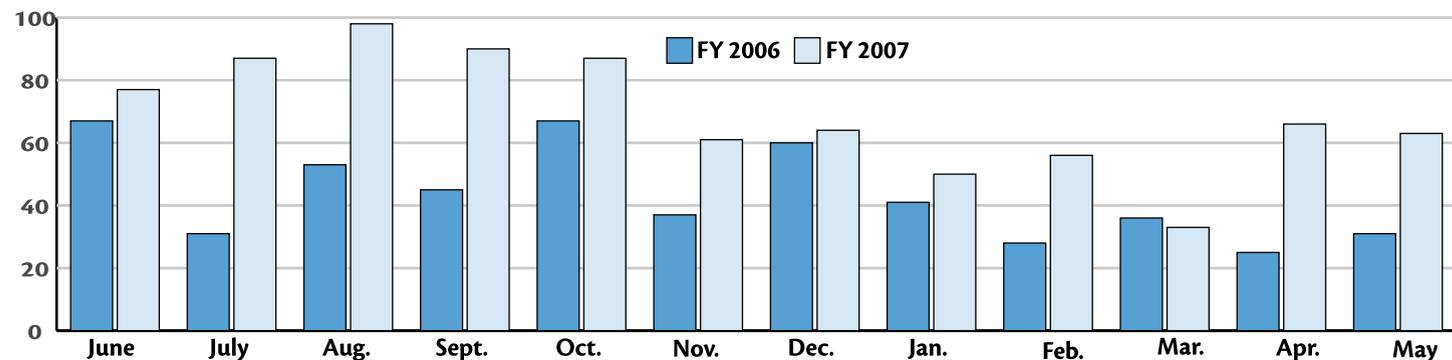
amazing things. We have over 50 foster homes that came forward to help during the "fish-cat crisis" and they also helped when we took in over 30 kittens from a colony of feral cats in Salisbury during the summer of 2007.

Here is a breakdown of our service area towns:



In addition, we assisted 232 cats from three MSPCA facilities in Boston, Methuen and Springfield.

In total, the MRFERS adoption program assisted cats in need in 53 cities and towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.



Monthly adoptions in 2006 and 2007. There has been a significant jump in adoptions, especially in the summer months.

Captain Courageous Fund

This fund has been successful in assisting injured feral cats in need. For the next year we are in the process of redefining this program.

Communication

We strongly encourage communication between those who are helping homeless cats in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Therefore, we are supportive of the statewide e-mail group called Masscats (www.masscats.org).

MRFRS has also launched the Whiskers and Tails Lecture Series. The lectures provide cat rescuers and the community with an opportunity to learn more about their pets from local experts.

Danville Sanctuary

This year has been a busy one for the cats at the Danville Sanctuary. We have had many monthly open houses so that the public has an opportunity to visit the facility and the cats. During the course of the year we have lost some of our residents. But we have some wonderful new additions to the



Dr. Regina Downey and Susan Yurkus examining a Danville resident during the yearly round up for health checks.

family too. Mariposa is a torti who came to us with kittens from the Brockton MSPCA (Massachusetts

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Her kittens were all adopted, but Mariposa stayed feral in her temperament and wanted to be outside to play and that is just what she does at our Sanctuary. We currently have 55 cats residing at the Sanctuary. They are enjoying the beginnings of fall!

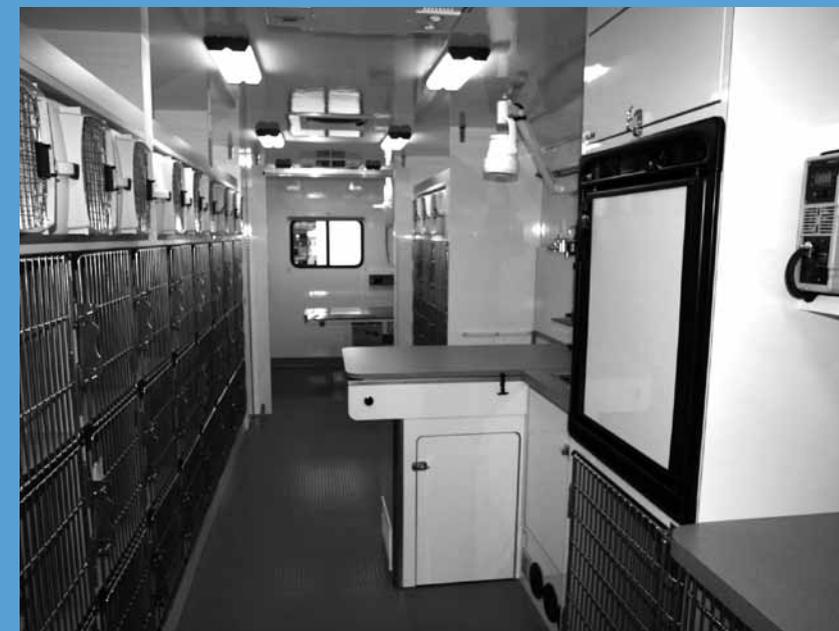


Mariposa

Feral Program

Our current group of volunteer feeders works tirelessly to make sure the crew of about 15 cats in Newburyport, Salisbury and Amesbury are cared for at nine feeding stations. We also monitor the areas to make sure we don't have any newcomers to these locations.

A Look Inside the SpayMASS Van THE CATMOBILE



In November of 2007 the MRFRS board of directors voted to develop this program to bring low-cost spay/neuter services to the many cats in the Northeast of Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. An October 2008 launch is planned. The van was recently dubbed "The Catmobile." Much like a super hero, this van is going to swoop in and save the day for approximately 8000 cats and their owners annually.

Low-Cost Program

During the past year we assisted 224 cats either by helping with spay/neuter or with medical expenses. We also worked with Amesbury Animal Control, Newburyport Animal Control, and Salisbury Animal Control to run two low-cost rabies vaccinations and microchipping clinics. We provided low-cost rabies vaccines for 173 cats and dogs and supplied 30 microchips.

MRFRS Partnerships

MRFRS currently has some very strong partnerships and relationships with the Massachusetts Animal Coalition, MSPCA, Shelter Me, Inc., the Lowell Humane Society and others. Through these partnerships we have been able to share our best practices and learn from others what they are doing to create an impact in other communities.

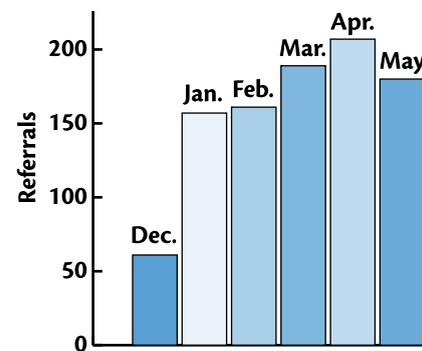
We have assisted in the creation of a new group, Feline Adoption Rescue Society (FARS), which is

modeling its programs after the MRFRS' and is working to assist the many homeless cats in Lowell, Massachusetts.

We are a lead presenter and sponsor of Massachusetts Animal Coalition's Whole Cat Workshop, which is held annually.

SpayMASS Hotline

This referral service is a new program of the MRFRS. It was started in October of 2007 and links cat and dog owners to low-cost spay/neuter services all across Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. So far the hotline has handled 922 calls and the calls are increasing rapidly.



A kitty at a feral Spay/Neuter Clinic

Sunday Spay/Neuter Clinics for Feral Cats

Through this volunteer program we have spayed/neutered 791 feral cats during the past year. This program is run by a group of 65 volunteers and one MRFRS staff member. It is one of the most efficient programs in Massachusetts and across the country. We offer this program free of charge for anyone who needs assistance with spaying or neutering a feral cat.

This program has assisted ferals from over 50 cities and towns. We have also provided training services to three groups, including a team

of volunteers and staff members at the Shelter Medicine Program at the Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in North Grafton, MA.

Our medical instruments travel far and wide as we share this expensive resource with groups that otherwise couldn't afford the supplies for their clinics.

What's Ahead for MRFRS!

As we look forward to 2008-2009, we plan to spend most of our time expanding our current programs. Our adoption program is coming very close to assisting over 1000 cats per year which is our goal.

We want to bring greater awareness and outreach to our facility in Danville and through our SpayMASS Van we will begin to have a greater awareness of the challenges facing our surrounding communities. With this information we can continue our role as leaders and role models in the no-kill movement and in the creation of humane solutions for all cats in need.

Our Mission

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society is a nationally recognized, non-profit volunteer organization committed to ensuring the health and welfare of feral and domestic cats and kittens by promoting pro-active, compassionate, no-kill programs.

Our Commitments

- We will be strong, passionate advocates for the humane treatment of cats.
- We will treat cats in our care humanely, and with compassion.
- We will respond to requests for assistance from our colleagues and communities promptly and courteously, and provide as much support as we can.
- We will ensure that confidential information about adopters, staff, volunteers, and supporters is kept private and is shared only to the extent necessary.
- We will support and celebrate the activities and successes of our colleagues.
- We will regard our mistakes as lessons that give us the opportunity to improve our ability to achieve our mission.
- We will share our knowledge of MRFRS operations, policies, and history freely with our colleagues, so as to improve operational efficiency and each other's skills.
- We will be sensitive to the impact of our words and actions on each other, on the reputation of the MRFRS, and on the ability of the MRFRS to accomplish its mission.

The Fish Cats

This spring, when local animal control officers were alerted to a hoarding situation, they realized that their limited facilities could not accommodate the cats involved so they called their allies at MRFRS.

When MRFRS staff members entered the home it was clear that the conditions were unsanitary. The cats were living in squalor, with only two litter boxes available for the cats and the smell of cat urine thick in the air.

Despite the terrible conditions the cats were well fed and remarkably socialized—but the situation had clearly gotten out of hand. You see, the owner of the house had always given away new litters of kittens that these unaltered cats had produced, but after the death of her husband, she began to keep them. By the time a neighbor had reported the problem, there were three generations of cats living in the home...and their numbers were growing.

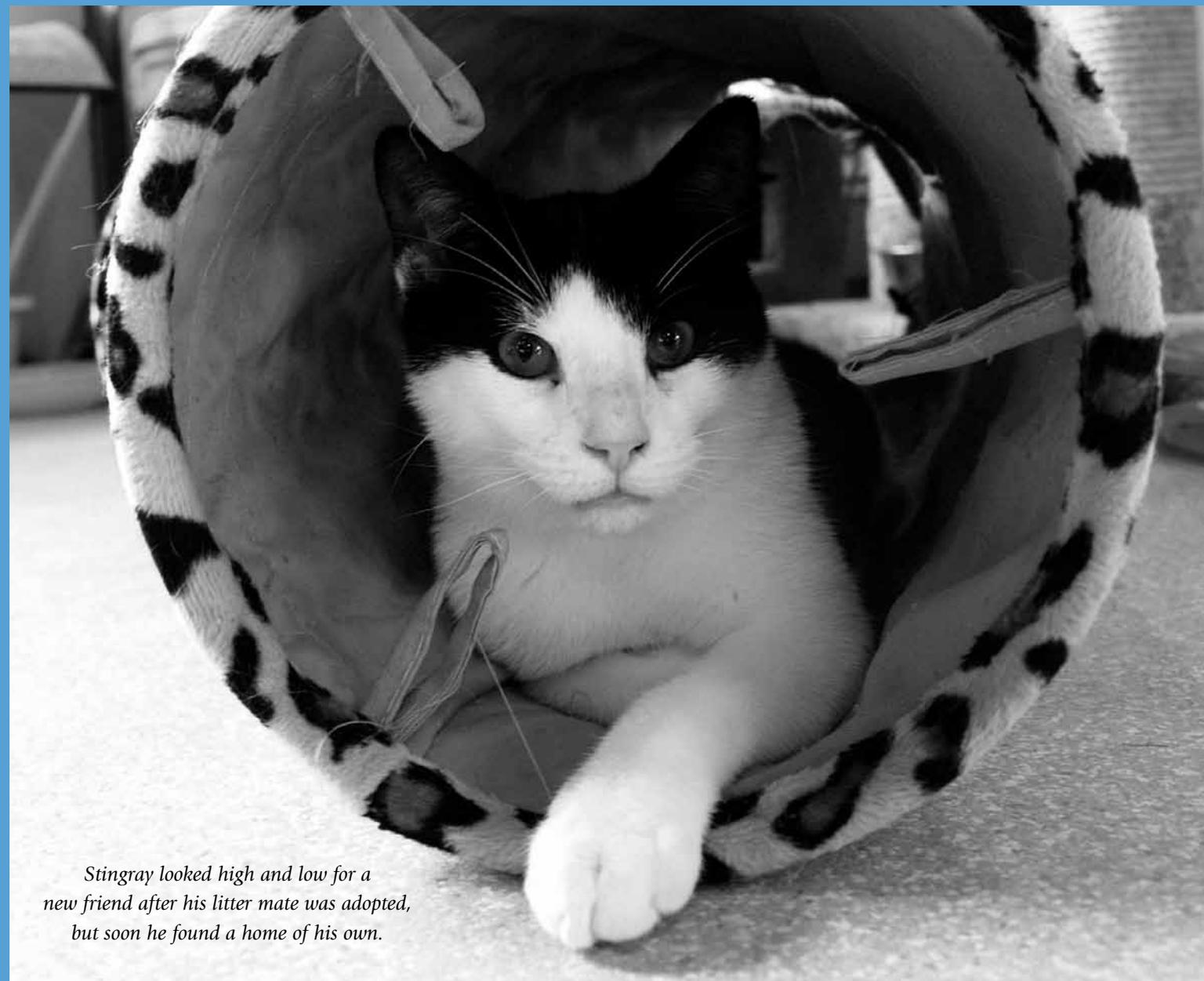
Two visits were made to the home, during which the mostly black and

white cats were put into carriers and shuttled back to MRFRS, where they were examined and vaccinated and their spay/neuter appointments were made. Many of the cats also required additional care for illnesses due to neglect or inbreeding.

Upon intake the cats also needed to be named, and given this daunting task, the staff decided on a “fish” theme—it seemed there were just enough sea creatures to lend a name to each kitty.

Today, almost all of the cats and kittens have been adopted into loving homes. The remaining few are a bit shy but are waiting patiently for their perfect person to come along and scoop them up.

We are proud that through teamwork with local authorities MRFRS was able to intervene and prevent a potentially tragic situation, allowing these cats and their previous owner a chance at a happier, healthier life.



Stingray looked high and low for a new friend after his litter mate was adopted, but soon he found a home of his own.



Ray, relaxing in his private suite at MRFERS' Salisbury Headquarters

Ray

One of the cats you've allowed us to help this past year is Ray—an incredibly handsome buff boy of about two years old. Late last fall, we received a call from an employee of a local veterinary practice about “Ray the Stray.” Ray had been left with them after his owner went into a nursing home, and they had adopted him to another client, who ultimately brought Ray back because his urine had such a strong odor. The vet had done exploratory surgery on Ray to determine if he had a retained testicle still producing testosterone in his abdomen, which would explain the odor, but they found nothing.

Ray had been at the vet's office for several weeks, and they could no longer stand the smell, so the vet was ready to euthanize him. The employee called to see if we might offer Ray another chance. We agreed, and took Ray in that day. He proved to be a super-sweet boy, but indeed, he smelled awful.

We tried a special diet with him, and medication—nothing seemed

to help. Ray's urine still smelled horrible, and he sprayed and urinated everywhere. He was incredibly aggressive with adult cats—though we soon discovered that Ray loved kittens!

As time went on, it became obvious that Ray simply wasn't fully neutered, and so we scheduled another exploratory surgery for him in January of this year. This time, the vet found what she thought was a retained testicle, and tied it off. And then we waited...and waited... and Ray continued to spray, and continued to smell terrible.

In desperation, Liz Pease contacted Dr. Martha Smith, the veterinarian at the Animal Rescue League of Boston, to see if she had any ideas. She directed Liz to a friend of hers, Dr. Steve Fish, a boarded surgeon working at the Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center of New England (VESCON) in Waltham. Dr. Fish reviewed Ray's case and he was intrigued! He agreed to see Ray, and performed an abdominal ultrasound on him, which showed little. Dr. Fish

decided to perform yet another exploratory surgery and finally found an intact testicle near Ray's diaphragm—nearly in his chest cavity!

After his recovery, we let Ray loose in the kitten room, where he delighted in being loose, and having many kitten friends to wash and snuggle! He charmed us all over again with his sweet personality and his beautiful gold eyes... and finally, one day, a man stopped by with his two teenaged sons. Johnny was recently divorced and looking for some company in his apartment. He had no other cats, and he fell in love with Ray the minute he saw him. He came back that night to take Ray home as a foster so that we could see if Ray would improve his litter box habits in a home.

It has been several weeks since Ray went home with Johnny, and so far things are going beautifully! Ray has made himself right at home, and even has his own chair when Johnny and his sons play a game of Monopoly!

Maho

Maho came to MRFRS in November of 2007. He had been found wandering outdoors but seemed grateful to have a warm place to stay. This roly-poly, orange and white cat chirped for attention and nuzzled anyone who came near. Overstuffed and slightly cross-eyed, he had the appearance of a well loved stuffed animal—a cat to fall in love with to be sure.

During his intake exam, the MRFRS staff noticed an abscess on Maho's tail. This was tended to and Maho began a six-month quarantine for possible rabies exposure—standard practice for a cat with a “wound of unknown origin.”

It was soon discovered however, that Maho's injury may have been self-inflicted when he began to show a pattern of self destructive behavior. Time and time again, caretakers would come across this poor kitty with a fresh wound on his tail. He would be rushed off to the vet where the damaged section of tail would be surgically removed. No sooner would his tail

heal, but he would create a new injury and the cycle would begin again.

Eventually, Maho's tail was reduced to a tiny stub, much like a rabbit's tail, and we were forced to keep an e-collar on him at all times. He was clearly uncomfortable and local veterinarians had no explanation for this odd behavior. So, MRFRS enlisted the help of pain specialist Dr. Lois Wetmore, at Tufts University Veterinary School.

After meeting with Maho, Dr. Wetmore reported that his behavior likely resulted from back pain and he could be experiencing symptoms similar to a “phantom limb”—tingling sensations and pain radiating from a tail that was no longer there.

A treatment plan was developed for Maho and time passed, but the various medication he was on seemed to have no effect. We would decide Maho was ready to have his e-collar off only to find he would resume his tail mutilation. Since conventional

treatments did not appear to be working, Dr. Wetmore recommended we try acupuncture.

This turned out to be very good advice indeed. Maho is currently seeing Dr. Regina Downey at the Holistic Animal Healing Center in Exeter, NH. He is receiving regular acupuncture treatments, orthopedic adjustments and a few supplements for support. We are happy to report that Maho is making great progress towards a comfortable life without back pain...and without that silly e-collar.

Thanks to your support Maho was able to receive the proper care (and time to discover what that care would be) for his rather unconventional issue. This lucky boy has also found a home with his foster family—who just couldn't say no to this adorable kitty, despite all his issues.

There is no doubt that at this very moment, Maho is wagging his stub proudly, chirping away and looking for a hug, grateful for all the help he has received.



Maho (e-collar) and his friend Helvi, enjoying a sunny afternoon at their foster home.

FINANCIAL REPORT

This information is from 2007-2008
unaudited financials.



Statement of Operating Revenue, Expenses and Non Operating Activities

<i>Financial Information</i>	<i>2007-2008</i>	<i>2006-2007</i>
Operating Revenue		
Fundraising Contributions	\$ 203,274	\$ 231,193
S/N Van Contribution	\$ 0	\$ 259,616
Adoption Program	\$ 151,087	\$ 99,550
Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$ 36,602	\$ 11,718
Feral Program	\$ 3,665	\$ 13,875
Grants	\$ 49,958	\$ 14,710
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 444,586	\$ 630,662
Expenses		
Fundraising	\$ 77,051	\$ 61,265
Adoption Program	\$ 230,393	\$ 171,227
Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$ 56,254	\$ 39,683
Feral Program	\$ 44,814	\$ 30,966
Other General Administrative	\$ 64,241	\$ 68,139
Total Expenses	\$ 472,753	\$ 371,280
Non Operating Activities		
Interest & Investment Income	\$ 16,016	\$ 15,387
Net income (Loss)	\$ (12,151)	\$ 274,769

<i>Other Financial Information</i>	<i>2007-2008</i>	<i>2006-2007</i>
Assets		
Cash- Unrestricted	\$ 392,371	\$ 409,307
Cash- Restricted	\$ 8,318	\$ 4,638
Accounts Receivable	\$ 21,666	\$ 20,520
Property, Plant and equipment, net	\$ 364,610	\$ 365,937
Total Assets	\$ 786,965	\$ 800,402
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 16,499	\$ 10,712
Mortgage Payable	\$ 113,635	\$ 120,946
Deferred Revenue	\$ 20,100	\$ 20,100
Other current Liabilities	\$ 798	\$ 558
Opening Balance Equity	\$ 72,883	\$ 72,883
Retained Earnings	\$ 575,202	\$ 300,434
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (12,153)	\$ 274,769
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 786,964	\$ 800,402

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE
CLINIC STAFF



MRFRS Officers and Executive Board

Stacy LeBaron, President
Richard Booth, Secretary
Patte Grimes

Jim Lagoulis, Vice President
Lynda Schnare, Treasurer

Board Members

Joe Bell
Kristen Eaton
Kristin Schwab

Betty Bronk
Linda Garcia
Mike Souza

MRFRS Operations Committee

Liz Pease, Director of Operations
Jennifer Gynan, Health Coordinator
Janet Rogers, Volunteer Coordinator
Renee Pabisz, Director of Adoptions
Tracey Desmond, Danville Manager
Amy Stevens, Spay/Neuter Coordinator

Gaye DiGiorgio, SpayMASS Coordinator
Elizabeth Marcus
Sayard Naehring
Ali Herman
Margaret Brender

Clinic Staff

Dr. Deborah Brady, Veterinarian
Kaitlin Little, Technician
Lydia Prysak, Technician

"There is, indeed, no single quality of the cat
that man could not emulate to his advantage."
- Carl Van Vechten



MRFRS was founded in 1992 in response to growth in the feral or homeless cat population along the Merrimack River in Newburyport. This growth resulted in widespread disease, malnutrition, and death in the feral cat population which endangered the health and well-being of Newburyport's residential cat population. MRFRS began a trap, neuter, and return (TNR) program for these cats in 1992 with feeding stations where the cats are fed twice a day. In 2007 we assisted cats in need in 54 towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In our service area towns (Salisbury, Newburyport, Amesbury, Newbury, Byfield, West Newbury, Merrimac, and Rowley, MA) we operate in a "kitten-free" zone and therefore we assist other communities in need of assistance with placing kittens. We are an open admission, no-kill facility for our service area towns for kittens and adult cats.



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