



The Merrimack River
Feline Rescue Society
Caring for Cats in Need

2009 Annual Report



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Kent Brockman was one of more than 10 cats & kittens taken in from a local hoarding situation. MRFRS was able to partner with MSPCA Law Enforcement to rescue Kent, a beautiful, gentle young male cat, and his housemates from a neglectful situation.



Jimmy Dean is missing the hair on his nose and parts of his ears, most likely due to frost bite. Needless to say, he was grateful to be rescued and taken into our nice warm building last winter. He is currently in the process of being adopted by his foster home.

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.

Our Mission

MRFRS is a nationally recognized, non-profit volunteer driven organization committed to ensuring the health and welfare of feral and domestic cats and kittens by promoting pro-active, compassionate, no-kill programs.





From the President

Dear Friends;

This year has been a whirlwind of activity for the MRFRS. I want to thank you again for your continued support and generosity of your gifts to the homeless kitties of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. This year was highlighted by the launch of our new program, The Catmobile, a low cost mobile spay/neuter clinic for cats. Since we started this program we have been able to help over 4000 cats receive spay/neuter services. The impact of this program has already been evident. In October 2008 while our economy was beginning to fall apart we saw our intake requests to our Salisbury adoption facility spike about 20%. However, by March we saw a substantial drop in surrender requests from our service area towns. We have also seen a drastic reduction in the number of kittens available in our service area towns. So the Catmobile program is making a difference in lives of cats in the communities that we serve—and beyond.

Our adoption program continues to serve the Greater Newburyport area and we have an amazing team of foster homes to assist the many special needs cats and kittens that are in our care. Our Sunday spay/neuter clinic exceeded our goals and spay/neutered over 900 feral cats for free this past year. We continued to care for our cats at the Danville Sanctuary and a wonderful opportunity has become available for us to move our cats from Danville to an indoor/outdoor space in

Salisbury. The Danville facility will be used by Animal Rescue of Merrimack Valley (a group that was formed by many MRFRS volunteers and former board members).

This year we have been focusing on reaching out to other communities outside of our region to share insights in the work we have been doing," to "insights about the work we have been doing over the past 15+ years. One such community we have focused on is the City of Lowell, MA. You will read later in the report, but I would just like to stress how great it is to see the impact we are making in this community.

In addition to the great staff that we have brought an Executive Director on board. We are enjoying working with this new member of our staff and I hope you will help welcome her.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this issue to our wonderful volunteer core. We can't do our day to day work without all of the hard work of the over 300 volunteers involved in our programs. Together, we are making a difference.

Sincerely,

Stacy LeBaron
President



From the Director of Operations

Greetings all,

We're winding up another busy summer here at MRFRS, and the cooler weather promises the beginning of our quieter season; a season in which we have time to reflect on the past year's accomplishments and challenges, and think about focusing our energies for the year ahead.

This year has seen many changes at MRFRS: the launch of our amazing Catmobile, a 33-foot self-contained mobile spay/neuter van, which has already altered over 5000 cats since it launched in September of 2008; a shift in our adoption policies towards a more holistic concept called "open adoptions," in which we focus more on spending time getting to know our adopters than on checking references; the beginning of a building project which will ultimately result in a new home in Salisbury for the feral cats at our Danville, NH sanctuary this fall; and the start of the re-launch of our volunteer program, which now includes a wonderful orientation program and training manual to support our hundreds of amazing volunteers.

Existing programs like our Sunday feral spay/neuter clinics and our PetSmart adoption center have continued to chip away at the numbers of homeless cats Massachusetts, and incredible

collaborative efforts, like the Dorchester Spay Day this June—a joint effort between MRFRS, Animal Rescue League of Boston, and the MSPCA—have made this year a true success on many different levels.

From Jet, a single injured stray cat carried through our door in desperate need of help, to the over 16,000 cats adopted out by MRFRS; from Jake & Gizmo, beloved pets with no place to go during their owner's military deployment to Iraq, to the nearly 15,000 cats spayed and neutered through our various programs, MRFRS touches countless cats—and countless people—every day of every year. We have a truly remarkable group of dedicated staff and volunteers who administer our programs, but we can't do it without your help! Your donations have allowed us to continue to provide assistance to as many cats as possible, and we hope that you will continue to support us as we forge ahead with new and innovative programs in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Liz Pease
Director of Operations

STATS AT A GLANCE 2008-2009

MRFRS Feral Cat Clinics have served 957 this year and 9,457 since inception in 2000.

The Catmobile has spayed or neutered 3,868 from September to June.

The SpayMass Hotline has fielded 5,571 calls this year and 6,243 since inception December 2007.

There are 10 feeding stations under MRFRS supervision taking care of 24 cats.

824 cats were adopted this year and 16,124 cats have been adopted since the programs inception in 1992.

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue's efforts have assisted a total of 29,449 cats since the founding of the organization.

Tina is one of the most lovable cats in the MRFRS family. She can often be found snuggled against a volunteer or waiting to greet a visitor. Tina is still looking for a home.



City of Lowell:

A Partnership for Change



Lowell TNR is a collaborative effort between seven animal welfare organizations. They include the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society, the Lowell Humane Society, the Feline Adoption and Rescue Society, SOS for Paws, Kitty Angels, Pets in Need and the Lowell Animal Control Officer. The group also includes nearly thirty unaffiliated caretakers from the city of Lowell. The purpose of this group is to provide TNR services to free-roaming and feral cats in the City of Lowell.

How did this all start? Over the years I had heard that the City of Lowell didn't have an organized local movement to assist feral cats. Live release rates at the city's shelter were dismally low. No records were kept by the staff at the time. As plans developed for the MRFERS's Catmobile (low-cost mobile spay/neuter clinic), it became apparent that we could play a role offering sterilization to the needy cats of Lowell. The local humane society had major management turnover at this time and a new pro-active staff joined the organization and began a partnership with the Catmobile. The Catmobile is able to be in Lowell every Monday offering services. Since the launch of the vehicle in October 2008, the Catmobile has sterilized over 800 cats owned by Lowell residents. Over ninety of these cats were assisted by funding from PetSmart Charities for owned cats. Before the Catmobile started in Lowell, the live release rate was at 48% at the local shelter; in 2008, it was 55%, and this year the shelter's live release is at 65% so far this year. So we are seeing some dramatic changes and look forward to a successful 2009.

**Statement of Operating
Revenue, Expenses and
Non-Operating Activities**

	2008-2009	2007-2008
<i>Financial Information</i>		
Operating Revenue		
Fundraising Contributions	\$182,783	\$ 203,274
S/N Van Contribution	\$336,700	\$ 0
Adoption Program	\$123,609	\$ 151,087
Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$8,135	\$ 36,602
Feral Program	\$10,528	\$ 3,665
Grants	\$94,216	\$ 49,958
Total Operating Revenue	\$755,971	\$ 444,586
Expenses		
Fundraising	\$55,872	\$ 77,051
Adoption Program	\$261,257	\$ 230,393
Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$50,269	\$ 56,254
Feral Program	\$48,080	\$ 44,814
Catmobile Van Program	\$357,012	N/A
Other General Administrative	\$54,781	\$ 64,241
Total Expenses	\$827,271	\$ 472,753
Non-Operating Activities		
Interest & Investment Income	\$(3,148)	\$ 16,016
Net income (Loss)	\$(74,448)	\$ (12,151)
<i>Other Financial Information</i>		
Assets		
Cash- Unrestricted	\$163,377	\$ 392,371
Cash- Restricted	\$8,403	\$ 8,318
Accounts Receivable	\$2,062	\$ 21,666
Medical Inventory	\$11,264	
Property, Plant & Equipment, net	\$544,599	\$ 364,610
Total Assets	\$729,705	\$ 786,965
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$20,649	\$ 16,499
Mortgage Payable	\$105,064	\$ 113,635
Deferred Revenue	\$35,000	\$ 20,100
Other Current Liabilities	\$7,257	\$ 798
Opening Balance Equity	\$72,883	\$ 72,883
Retained Earnings	\$563,300	\$ 575,202
Net Income (Loss)	\$(74,448)	\$ (12,153)
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$729,705	\$ 786,964

Thank You

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society would like to thank the following foundations and donors who have helped make this past year a success.

Ameriprise

Animal Friendly License Plate Program/Massachusetts Animal Coalition

ASPCA

Bernice Barbour Foundation

C.E. & F.C.A. Foundation

Coe Foundation

Flagg Foundation

Harpley Foundation

LeBaron Foundation

Maddie's Fund

Meacham Foundation Memorial of the American Humane Society

New England Federation of Humane Societies

Newburyport Civic League

Thomas Anthony Pappas Charitable Foundation

Elinor Baker Patterson Trust

Petco

Petfinder.com

PetSmart Charities

Red Acre Foundation

Shirley Shattuck Windsor Trust

Spay Day USA

Two Commandments Foundation

MRFRS Officers and Executive Board

Stacy LeBaron, President
Jim Lagoulis, Vice President
Richard Booth, Secretary
Lynda Schnare, Treasurer
Patte Grimes

Board Members

Joe Bell
Betty Bronk
Kristen Eaton
Kristin Schwab

MRFRS Operations Committee FY 2008

Liz Pease, Director of Operations
Gaye DiGiorgio, SpayMASS Coordinator
Jennifer Gynan, Health Coordinator
Janet Rogers, Volunteer Coordinator
Renee Pabisz, Director of Adoptions
Tracey Desmond, Danville Manager
Amy Stevens, Spay/Neuter Coordinator
Elizabeth Marcus
Sayard Naehring
Ali Herman
Margaret Brender

Clinic Staff FY 2008

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

Baggage (The Meaning of Rescue)

By Evelyn Colbath

Now that I'm home, bathed, settled and fed,
All nicely tucked in my warm new bed,
I'd like to open my baggage,
Lest I forget,
There is so much to carry,
So much to regret.

Hmmm...Yes, there it is, right on the top,
Let's unpack Loneliness, Heartache and Loss,
And there by my perch hides Fear and Shame.
As I look on these things I tried so hard to leave,
I still have to unpack my baggage called Pain.
I loved them, the others, the ones who left me,
But I wasn't good enough - for they didn't want me.

Will you add to my baggage?
Will you help me unpack?
Or will you just look at my things,
And take me right back?
Do you have the time to help me unpack?
To put away my baggage, to never repack?
I pray that you do - I'm so tired you see,
But I do come with baggage,
Will you still want me?

Tina



Volunteers

MRFRS would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who open their hearts and homes to our kitties. Because of their tireless efforts, local cats and kittens will have happier, healthier lives and a voice in the community.

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 2009 we assisted cats in need in 54 cities and 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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