



The Merrimack River

**Feline Rescue Society**

Caring for Cats in Need

**Annual Report**

**• 2010 •**



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Dear Friends,

It's been another year of high activity for the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society (MRFRS). Every day we are challenged to innovate within each of our program areas, all of which focus on ensuring the best possible lives for homeless cats and helping owners to care for their own pets. Whether it's adopting out homeless cats and kittens, offering low- or no-cost spay/neuter services on the Catmobile or at a feral clinic, and/or providing low-cost medical or temporary housing for cats—the MRFRS strives to help.

Your support and generosity make our work possible and we are grateful to you for sharing time and resources. The MRFRS is fortunate to have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, each committed to the welfare of the cats we serve. This team includes a small but tireless

staff and over 300 volunteers, who together contributed over 15,000 hours this year. Our volunteers offer shelter, adoption, medical, fundraising, administrative, feral feeding, and/or foster care assistance. They are truly an invaluable resource. Another remarkable resource is our Board of Directors, and we are truly indebted to them for their leadership and dedication.

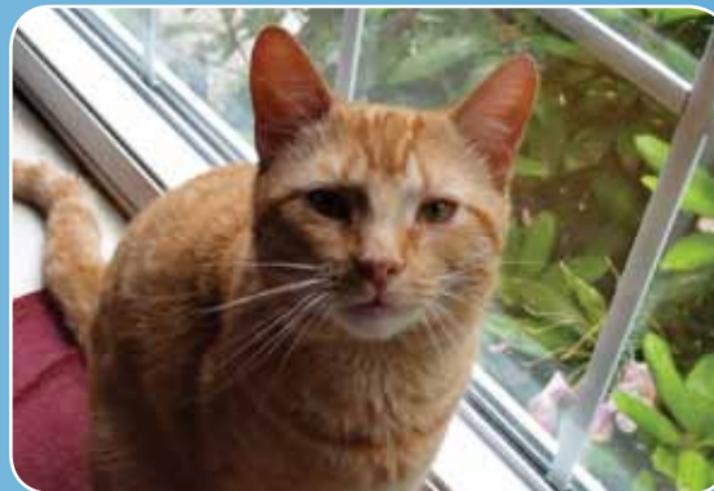
It is a true honor to serve the cats and people in our community. One of our everyday pleasures is to see a frightened, homeless, and/or wounded cat “turn around” and become a treasured family member to an adopter— or to place a feral or special needs cat in an optimal situation. Take the case of Bear (an aptly named feisty cat) who is one happy kitty in her new role of mouser and barn cat!

We invite you to read through this Annual Report to learn more about the MRFRS's programs and our wide-reaching impact, all made possible by donations. Your contribution to our success is profoundly appreciated.



Liz Pease, Director of Operations  
Maryellen Madaio, Executive Director  
Stacy LeBaron, President

# MRFRS 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, nonprofit, 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.**

# MRFRS Services & Annual Statistics



**MRFRS services are designed to help any cat, in any circumstance of need. The following programs comprehensively address the needs of our community and the different types of cats living among us.**

The [Adoption Program](#) rescues homeless cats and places them with loving families. In 2009, 648 cats were taken in from northeastern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. All of the cats were checked for wellness prior to being placed with new owners, and 100% had been vaccinated, microchipped, and spayed or neutered prior to placement. Since inception in 1992 we have adopted out 16,782 cats and kittens.

The [Feral Program](#) helps curb feline overpopulation and its negative consequences by leading a collaborative, wide-ranging program of trap-neuter-release (TNR). In 2009, 679 feral cats were trapped from more than 71 cities and towns in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Significant involvement from volunteers and pro bono veterinarians kept the costs as low as possible – the average cost per cat was merely \$45 (for sterilization, rabies vaccination and flea treatment). All of the cats were returned to their home locations. We also consulted on and act as the fiduciary agent for the Lowell TNR Collaborative. This group of volunteers and local shelters specifically addresses the feral cats in the City Lowell with the help of PetSmart Charities.

This program started in October 2009 and since that date 270 feral cats have been trapped, neutered, vaccinated and returned. Since inception we have sterilized 10,150 cats at no charge to caretakers.

The [Catmobile Program](#), a mobile veterinary clinic launched in September 2008, serves communities along Route 495. Through this program, MRFRS can sterilize more than 8,000 felines annually, establish a stronger presence in areas that are distant from the existing clinic locations, and reach new sources of program revenue.

The Catmobile primarily serves cats at shelters and belonging to private owners. In 2009 we sterilized 5299 cats. Since inception

in 2008 we have sterilized 9150 cats and kittens. The Catmobile program also operates the [SpayMass Hotline](#), which refers people to low-cost spay/neuter services in Massachusetts and Southern, NH for cats and dogs. In 2009 we serviced 6593 calls for assistance. Since inception in 2007 we have serviced 13,836 calls.

The [Low-Cost Medical Program](#) provides basic vaccines and microchipping at an affordable price. We operate two vaccination clinics each year and we offer low-cost microchipping at our headquarters in Salisbury. In 2009 we vaccinated 110 cats and dogs and microchipped 28 cats and dogs.

The [Bridge Program](#) assists local cat owners who must be separated from their pets in order to overcome periods of impaired health, hospitalization, or compromised safety (e.g., domestic violence). The duration of foster care or boarding ranges from two weeks to three months.

While owners sometimes elect to place their pets for adoption after a period of emergency foster care, MRFRS is committed to supporting these owners in taking the time they need to make the best decisions for their pets and themselves.

# To The Rescue

## MRFRS Partners with Local Coalition

It began simply enough when we received an email from a young woman asking for help with a large number of cats in her home. Pregnant and 18 years old, she lived in public housing with her father, who was terminally ill with cancer. Though insisting that the cats were well-cared for, she indicated that the family could not afford to feed them any longer, as their numbers were increasing and some were ill. WFCC responded almost immediately, reading between the lines and knowing this situation was probably much more grim than what was initially reported.

When WFCC volunteers arrived, they were greeted kindly and were invited into the apartment. Immediately upon entering one volunteer discovered one cat that had horrible ulcers on its mouth causing distortion of the entire mouth and lips -- we soon found there were several cats with the same condition, and one who was so thin and ill with a liver shunt that he could barely move. The owner defensively called out, "He eats all the time but he never gains weight..." In one corner, 5 young cats were scrambling to get what few bits of dry food were left. There was not a single water bowl to be found.

It was a very sad situation for the 15-20 cats in the home, many of which were pregnant, and those of us responding to the

call exchanged knowing glances, painfully aware that we could not possibly leave without taking all of these at-risk cats with us. We began the process of loading into carriers those that were weakest and most sick, explaining as we did so that we would ensure that the cats received veterinary care and assessment, and also that we would then place as many as we could find into adoptive homes or foster homes. We also knew that some might need to be returned to the family temporarily in order to improve their socialization to better their chances for successful adoption.

Even with nearly 20 cats underfoot in various stages of pregnancy, hunger, thirst, illness and neglect, the young woman who initially

called us was reluctant to give them up. Ultimately, we agreed that Angel, to whom she felt particularly bonded, would be spayed and returned to her, possibly with a couple of other adult kitties from the colony – along with some guidance and possibly initial supervision on appropriate care and housing. Already overwhelmed with fosters, we had to quickly figure out where on earth these cats could go – standard procedure required that they be quarantined or isolated from other cats until we could assess their health status and address any infectious conditions in particular.

We knew the Catmobile was coming to Woburn, but we had no appointments booked at that time; we were really caught

offguard by this sudden urgent need. It would not be an understatement to say that there was an air of desperation about us that day!

The Catmobile's Dr. Deb Brady, Coordinator Amy Stevens and the staff of the Catmobile agreed on very short notice to allow us to bring as many as we could and said that they would help us work it all out. "Just bring all of them," said Amy calmly.. We were and will always be grateful for their help. These cats, some of whom were really in crisis, needed immediate attention —and the MRFRS's Catmobile team simply stepped up and got to work.

This situation was handled amazingly quickly and with heartwarming success, as

many of the cats were indeed adopted, and the ones who were returned to the home (only 4 adults) are doing well; we remain in contact with the family to support a healthy outcome. After all the hard work the WFCC volunteers and the Catmobile team had done in collaborating to respond to an immediate and overwhelming need, the reward is to know that the cats were spared any more suffering and that the family had some relief and help when they needed it. We will never forget the look at the father's face when we completed the rescue. "Thank you so much for what you have done to help," he said. "You have been our guardian angels." This was a rare happy ending for many of us doing rescue, and one we won't soon forget.

Like many cities, the Woburn area struggles with a feline population that grows to a large extent unchecked, rampant with "owned" cats whose families have not had them spayed or neutered, as well as with many lost, abandoned or feral cats. So of course the Woburn Feral Cat Coalition (WFCC) was very excited when the Catmobile first came to this area. We really needed a low-cost mobile spay/neuter clinic in our area, and the community has truly benefited from the services of the Catmobile ever since it began. WFCC can't thank MRFRS, Dr. Deb Brady, and the MRFRS staff enough for their dedication to helping cats in need. They all work tirelessly and are tremendously skilled, which makes it even easier for us to entrust our cats, both feral and friendly, to their care.

Because of the very reasonable rates charged for the Catmobile services, which include the most necessary medical treatments, including spaying, neutering, and more, the WFCC has been able to assist many more cats (and their people!) than had previously been possible in obtaining proper medical care and sterilization services. In addition to helping to get the word out, we find that people are much more likely to have their cat spayed/neutered when the cost is affordable and the location is convenient. With the help of the Catmobile, the Woburn area cat overpopulation problem is noticeably improving! Because the WFCC is a small nonprofit group, cost is an issue, and the WFCC works diligently to help as many cats as possible. As a large city, Woburn has a very high volume of cats in need. The Catmobile has been extremely accommodating in helping us to balance needs with resources

Thank you, MRFRS and the Catmobile, for doing the tough but necessary work that you do. The WFCC appreciates you!

Sincerely - Lori Riccio, WFCC President, Woburn, MA.



# Financial Report

Operating Revenue	2009	2010	Expenses	2009	2010
Fundraising Contributions	\$182,783	\$267,093	Fundraising	\$55,872	\$47,589
S/N Van Contribution	\$336,700	\$428,519	Adoption Program	\$261,257	\$357,974
Adoption Program	\$123,609	\$93,465	Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$50,269	\$28,130
Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program	\$8,135	\$1,639	Feral Program	\$48,080	\$0
Feral Program	\$10,528	\$0	Catmobile Van Program	\$357,012	\$441,147
Grants	\$94,216	\$82,924	Other General Administrative	\$54,781	
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$755,971</b>	<b>\$873,640</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$827,271</b>	<b>\$874,840</b>
			<b>Non-Operating Activities</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
			Interest & Investment Income	\$(3,148)	\$2,882
			<b>Net income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$(74,448)</b>	<b>\$1,682</b>

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

Other Financial Information	2009	2010	Liabilities	2009	2010
<b>Assets</b>			Accounts Payable	\$20,649	\$25,217
Cash- Unrestricted	\$163,377	\$214,740	Mortgage Payable	\$105,064	\$96,649
Cash- Restricted	\$8,403	\$9,017	Deferred Revenue	\$35,000	\$48,480
Accounts Receivable	\$2,062	\$5,766	Other Current Liabilities	\$7,257	\$6,692
Medical Inventory	\$11,264	\$13,869	Opening Balance Equity	\$72,883	\$72,883
Property, Plant & Equipment, net	\$544,599	\$497,062	Retained Earnings	\$563,300	\$488,851
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$729,705</b>	<b>\$740,454</b>	<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$(74,448)</b>	<b>\$1,682</b>
			<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$729,705</b>	<b>\$740,454</b>

# MRFRS Staff and a Thank You



## **MRFRS Officers and Executive Board**

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

## **Board Members**

Joe Bell, Paul Stauch, Deborah MacIntosh  
Kristen Petrie, Kristin Schwab

## **Catmobile Staff**

Dr. Deborah Brady, Veterinarian  
Lisa Andreczyk, Technician  
Lydia Prysak, Technician

## **MRFRS Operations Committee**

Maryellen Madaio, Executive Director  
Liz Pease, Director of Operations  
Margaret Hall, Healthcare Coordinator  
Amy Stevens, Spay/Neuter Coordinator  
Janet Rogers, Volunteer Coordinator  
Lisa Enright, SpayMass Hotline/Catmobile  
Amy Moody, Cat Care & Adoptions  
Michiko Sherwood, Adoptions  
Tricia Lentz, PetSmart Adoptions  
Ali Herman, PetSmart Adoptions  
Erin Concannon, Healthcare, Spay/Neuter Asst.

## **Volunteers**

Thank you for opening your hearts and homes to our kitties. Because of your tireless efforts, local cats and kittens will have happier, healthier lives and a voice in the community.

## **Poor Tom by W. Girt**

Poor Tom sits in his lonely pen sadly wondering why  
Folk say 'Hello' and rub his ears, but always walk on by.  
Nobody ever takes him home; small kittens come and go,  
While he is always left behind; just why, he'll never know.

Sometime he must have been a pet before he lost his home,  
Was he one more abandoned cat left wandering and alone?  
Poor Tom, it's sad for older cats when life goes badly wrong,  
And facing an uncertain world they're left to struggle on.



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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