



2015

Annual Report



The Merrimack River
Feline Rescue Society
Caring for Cats in Need



**“Alone we can do so
little; together we can
do so much.”
Helen Keller**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Mission and Commitments . . .	1
Adoption Program	2
Spay/Neuter Programs	6
Veterinary Assistance Programs . . .	8
Other Programs	10
Thank You to Our Supporters . . .	11
Financial Report	12
Staff and Board of Directors	13

Our Mission

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society is a nationally recognized, nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization committed to ensuring the health and welfare of feral and domestic cats and kittens by promoting proactive, 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.

Through your support, 499 cats and

Adoption Program

Our Adoption Program takes in homeless cats and kittens and places them into loving homes. In FY 2015, MRFRS took in 518 cats and kittens. All were checked for wellness prior to adoption, treated for any medical conditions — and 100% were vaccinated and spayed or neutered before adoption. MRFRS is especially well known for our ability to find loving homes for older and special needs cats and kittens. Since our inception in 1992, the Adoption Program has placed over 19,000 cats and kittens.



kittens found new homes this year.

Spader ▶

Spader, a 3-year old solid black cat, came to MRFRS as a transfer from another Massachusetts shelter that had few options for him, given his Feline Leukemia-positive status and their already overcrowded adoption center. X-rays showed that Spader had likely been hit by a car earlier in his life as a stray. He had healed on his own, but had lasting damage to his pelvis, causing incontinence, an issue that is usually a deal-breaker for most adopters — but not for the couple who fell for him. This sweet couple had recently lost their previous MRFRS FeLV+ cat, and felt that Spader needed them — and vice versa! They love him so much, and they take his incontinence in stride, using diapers, pinning puppy pads to their bed where he likes to sleep, and cheerfully cleaning up after this truly lucky cat when he has an accident.

◀ Jitterbug

Jitterbug, a BIG beautiful girl of three, originally came to us as a stray. She was adopted, but soon surrendered back because she didn't get along with other animals in the house and did not always use her litter box. Full of life, Jitterbug was a cat who loved to play and get attention — but she continued to skip the litter box on occasion at the shelter. After a year in the adoption center, a wonderful couple took Jitterbug home as a foster-to-adopt to see how her litter box habits would be in her own home as an only girl. J-Bug passed the test with flying colors and now has a wonderful home where she sleeps with her humans and couldn't be happier!



Through your support, 499 cats and



◀ Barnabus

Handsome, nine-year-old Barnabus came to us from another shelter as a “kitty with attitude.” He was quiet and enjoyed attention, but would strike out at people without warning. After a full year with us, a nice man came in one day to meet Barnabus — who did what he usually did: scratched the potential adopter. This time, however, the adopter wasn’t bothered at all! In fact, he liked Barnabus’s “attitude,” and decided to take him home! The rest is happy history, proving that the right person is out there for every one of our cats.



kittens found new homes this year.

Extreme Makeover ▶

In January of 2015, we took the unusual step of closing our adoption center for about six weeks for an “Extreme Makeover.” To create a brighter, cleaner, and healthier environment for our cats (and our staff, volunteers, and adopters), we stripped down every room of the shelter, and thoroughly cleaned, repainted, and resealed the floors in each one. In addition, the entire lower level’s heating, ventilation system and ceiling tiles, much in need of repair, were completely replaced.

The adoption center reopened in February and everyone agreed the effort was well worth the time, effort, and resources required. We are especially thankful to the generous donors of funds and building materials, and for the extra time graciously lent by our staff and volunteers to make this project possible.



With your support, 7151 cats we

THE CATMOBILE

MRFRS's two mobile low-cost spay/neuter clinics for cats, Catmobile 1 and Catmobile 2, serve Eastern and Central Massachusetts, traveling as far south as Attleboro, as far west as Gardner, and as far north as Salisbury. Each vehicle is staffed by a veterinarian and technician, and can accommodate up to 40 cats per day. Since the inception of the Catmobile program in 2008, we've spayed or neutered over 43,000 cats. The Catmobile program serves owned cats, shelter cats, and unowned strays and ferals, all at discounted rates.



re spayed or neutered this year.

Praise from a Catmobile client:

"I just want to thank you for your help in making it possible for both Stanley and Ollie to have their surgeries. (I did decide to have them both microchipped too.)

Thank you for finding that extra grant money for Stanley and alerting me to the Feb. spaying special for Ollie, during our initial conversation. And for finding a time and place that worked for me when the Waltham appointment was cancelled.

I would also appreciate it if you could pass on to the veterinarian and technician of the Catmobile my thanks. Both kittens are doing great and were feeling good when I picked them up.

As I'm sure you know, it is a bit of a cattle call at drop-off and pick-up, so there is no real opportunity to say more than a quick thank you to both women.

So, once again, thank you. My wonderful feral kittens are ready for a wonderful and long life."

B.H., Lincoln, Massachusetts

Sunday Spay/Neuter Clinics

MRFRS operates a monthly spay/neuter clinic for feral cats in partnership with MSPCA Nevins Farm. These clinics are free to trappers and are run entirely by volunteers. Since the program's inception, over 12,500 free-roaming cats have been spayed/neutered and vaccinated, including 444 this past year.

Mentoring Program

The MRFRS Mentoring Program began in 2012 with major funding from PetSmart Charities. Each year, MRFRS mentors guide carefully selected animal rescues from around the country in piloting free-roaming cat spay/neuter programs. After completing intensive projects, participants are guided on how to apply for larger grants from PetSmart Charities in order to continue their spay/neuter initiatives. During the 2015 fiscal year, we worked with 22 groups in nine states, resulting in nearly 4000 cats spayed or neutered, bringing the total number of cats impacted since the program's inception to over 9,000.

"The (mentoring) experience has been a learning and growing one for us! Our active three member team has now altered 520 cats to date, (including) over 200 thus far this year, a much larger number than in our previous 2 years."

T. B. Blair, Nebraska

Your contributions helped 73 sick or

Veterinary Assistance Programs

Feline Assistance Resources and Support (FARS)

MRFRS's FARS Program assists low-income pet owners when their cats need medical care for injuries or illness. FARS's goal is to give loving cat owners the chance to keep their cats, rather than surrender them to a shelter or be forced to decide to euthanize. The program is funded solely by grants and donations.

Captain Courageous Fund (CCF)

MRFRS's CCF was founded in memory of a feral cat named Captain, who passed away as a result of severe injuries. In his honor, the CCF assists caretakers of feral and unowned cats in getting the medical care these cats need when they are injured or ill. We helped 28 cats in these situations last year.



injured cats get the care they needed.



◀ Spam

Spam the cat was rushed to a local veterinary office by his owner. The poor kitty was suffering from a severe, life-threatening bowel blockage. Unable to afford the emergency surgery, the client agreed to give Spam up to the veterinary office in order to get him the treatment he needed. Seeing that she was heartbroken at the thought of losing her cat (and of her other pets losing their best pal), the vet reached out to see if our FARS program might be able to help. Thankfully, we were able to cover the cost of Spam's surgery, allowing him to stay with the owner who loved him, plus his doggy and kitty BFFs.

"You saved my cat's life," the owner wrote to us in an emotional thank you note. "And by letting him come back home to the two other rescues here, you've saved our family as we know it."

◀ Peanut

Peanut was rescued from a very tough part of Southbridge. A stray who had been outside for years on his own, Peanut was thin, messy, and generally beat up. His rescuer, Janet, said she saw people throwing rocks at Peanut when he tried to get into the garbage to eat.

Janet brought him into her home and discovered he had bloody, oozing wounds on his belly and back. When these wounds wouldn't heal with her care, she contacted CCF for assistance in getting Peanut diagnosed and treated. It took some detective work to determine the cause of his symptoms, but finally, a veterinary dermatologist discovered that Peanut had severe allergies.

At last, Peanut is healing after months — perhaps years — of living with his painful skin condition. He's putting on weight and finally living the good life at Janet's house...thanks to help from CCF.

Other Programs

Bridge Program

Our Bridge Program helps cat owners who find themselves in difficult life situations — homelessness, domestic violence, hospitalizations, house fires, or other issues — with foster care for their beloved pets. The duration of foster care ranges from several weeks to several months, and all pets are spayed or neutered, microchipped, and updated on vaccines during that time.

TNR & Trap Rental Program

MRFRS provides rental of humane traps for the purpose of TNR (trap-neuter-return). We will gladly provide instruction on how to use traps, referral to low-cost or free spay/neuter services, and colony management tips. MRFRS volunteers also feed several managed feral cat colonies in the greater Salisbury area.

Rabies and Microchipping Clinics

MRFRS offers low-cost rabies and microchipping clinics to the local community three times a year. Run by shelter staff and volunteer veterinarians, the clinics are open to cats and dogs, and help ensure that everyone in our community has access to low-cost rabies shots — which are required by law in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire for public health reasons. In FY 2015, we vaccinated 360 animals and microchipped 58. Since the inception of this program in 2009, over 1600 animals have been vaccinated, and more than 275 have received permanent identification by microchipping.





Thank You

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society is grateful to the following foundations, whose generous grants of services and funds have helped us fulfill our mission and commitments to cats and their guardians during this fiscal year.

American Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals

Animal Welfare Fund

Bernice Barbour Foundation

Community Foundation of
Central MA

Elinor Baker Patterson Trust

Harpley Foundation

Institution for Savings Charitable
Foundation

Katherine Bradford Foundation

LeBaron Foundation

Massachusetts Animal
Coalition

Newburyport Odd Fellows

Petco Foundation

PetSmart Charities

Red Acre Foundation

We would also like to thank the many organizations and individuals who support our annual fundraising events through sponsorships and in-kind donations of services and auction items, as well as our Founder's Alliance donors, who represent our most loyal and generous givers.



Financial Report Statement of Operating Revenue, Expenses, and Non-Operating Activities

Operating Revenue	FY 2015	FY 2014	Other Financial Information	FY 2015	FY 2014
Catmobile	\$559,780	\$561,708	Assets		
Adoption	59,126	52,028	Cash- Unrestricted	\$480,750	\$451,907
Surrender fees	7,987	7,595	Cash- Restricted	27,472	10,118
Donations & Appeals	303,490	386,840	Property, Plant		
Grants	284,501	286,153	& Equipment, ppds	471,482	513,854
Fundraising	160,582	153,623	Total Assets	\$979,704	\$975,879
Interest Income	4,016	3,769			
Total Operating Revenue	\$1,379,482	\$1,451,716	Liabilities		
			Accounts Payable	\$39,285	\$19,185
Expenses			Mortgage Payable	77,264	80,495
Salaries & Taxes	\$557,584	\$553,677	Other Current Liabilities	2,362	1,880
Animal Care	301,215	331,355	Opening Balance Equity	72,883	72,883
Grant Consumption	213,835	224,530	Retained Earnings	801,436	791,529
Admin, Bldg & Catmobile costs	271,369	293,387	Net Income (Loss)	(13,526)	9,907
Fundraising	49,005	38,860	Total Liabilities & Equity	\$979,704	\$975,879
Total Expenses	\$1,393,008	\$1,441,809			
Net income (Loss)	(\$13,526)	\$9,907			

Staff

Director of Operations

Liz Pease

Catmobile Veterinarians

Dr. Deborah Brady

Dr. Nicole Breda



Operations

Erika Ackerman

Cindy Bernard

Jane Carolan

Britney Fox Hover

Kelly Keiley

Patty Lyon

Stephanie Lyon

Sara Morandi

Elizabeth Perron

Gaye Piechowiak

Jeanne Pratt

Janet Rogers

Jennifer Sanchez-Gaudet

Jamie Viator

Melissa Witherspoon



Officers & Executive Board

Adrienne Linnell, President

Jennifer Hickman, Vice President

Lynda Schnare, Treasurer

Lisa Finkel, Secretary/Clerk

Stacy LeBaron, At Large

Board Members

Tara Becker

Joe Bell

Dorothy Fairweather

Patte Grimes

Mary Kilpatrick

Jim Lagoulis

Scott Mattheson

AJ Nadkarni



MRFRS was founded in 1992, in response to the growth in the feral and homeless cat population along the Merrimack River in Newburyport. We began a trap, neuter and return (TNR) program for these cats with feeding stations where they were fed twice a day. The 300 cats originally living on the waterfront have today dwindled to just a handful. In 1993, we opened our first adoption center and then, in 2003, moved to our current cageless facility. In 2000, we started offering free monthly spay/neuter clinics for feral cats, and in 2008, we launched our Catmobile program to provide convenient and affordable spay/neuter services in over 30 locations across Eastern and Central Massachusetts. All told, MRFRS has helped more than 100,000 kittens and cats during our 22 years of work.



**63 Elm Street (Route 110) • Salisbury MA, 01952
978-462-0760 • info@mrfrs.org • www.mrfrs.org
Catmobile Hotline: 978-465-1940 • www.catmobile.org**