

For immediate release



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Help Stop Puppy and Kitten Season

AARF urges pet owners to spay and neuter this spring

Spring is almost here, and unfortunately, that means you'll probably be seeing more stray dogs and cats around your community. During "puppy and kitten season"—an annual pet population explosion—there are more homeless pets than any other time of year. Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends Inc. (AARF) is working to battle the problem of pet overpopulation by promoting responsible pet ownership, including spaying and neutering.

"The solution to the problem of homeless puppies and kittens is simple: the spaying and neutering of all pets," says Susan Leisure, executive director of AARF. She says AARF is inundated with calls every spring from people whose pets have delivered litters of puppies or kittens. "In more than five years of rescue and adoption work in Atlanta, we have not seen any decrease in the number of unwanted puppies and kittens in the springtime."

And, sadly, AARF and the other rescue groups in Atlanta can't come close to containing the problem. "For every puppy or kitten adopted during kitten season, even at the best county shelters, at least one other puppy or kitten will be euthanized. At higher-kill shelters, as little as one in five find a home."

Casper's Fund, an outreach program by AARF, provides free and subsidized spays and neuters to metro Atlanta residents in exchange for volunteer hours. The program also helps participants get their pets vaccinations, heartworm tests and FIV/FelV tests at a reduced cost. There is no income requirement for participating.

For each hour of volunteer service, Casper's Fund participants receive a \$15 subsidy (maximum \$75) toward the cost of a spay/neuter procedure. The cost of the surgery is covered after only five hours of volunteer activity. "Through Casper's Fund, pet owners have the option to get their pet altered for free, so there is really no excuse for anyone not to spay or neuter," Leisure says.

For more information, please visit www.caspersfund.org.

Top 3 Reasons to Spay or Neuter

1) **It helps to reduce pet overpopulation.** Most countries have a surplus of companion animals and are forced to euthanize or disregard their great suffering. The surplus is in the millions in the United States. Cats are 45 times as prolific as humans, and dogs are 15 times as prolific as humans.

2) **Sterilization of your cat or dog will increase his or her chance of a longer and healthier life.** Altering your dog will increase his life an average of 1 to 3 years; cats, 3 to 5 years. Altered animals have a very low to no risk of mammary gland tumors/cancer, prostate cancer, ovarian, testicular and other cancers.

3) **Sterilizing your cat or dog makes him or her a better pet,** reducing the urge to roam and decreasing the risk of contracting diseases or getting hurt. Surveys indicate that as many as 85 percent of dogs hit by cars are unaltered. Unaltered male cats living outside have been shown to live on average less than two years.

Source: Spay USA, www.spayusa.org

Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends Inc. (AARF), founded in 2002, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal welfare organization licensed by the state of Georgia. AARF is run solely on adoption fees, private donations and charitable grants, without government support. All donations are tax-deductible. For more information, visit www.aarfatlanta.org or call (678) 318-1886.