



HASS Statement on Community Cat Programming

Research illustrates that:

- Cats lose their lives in US shelters each year
- Cats entering shelters are unlikely to be reclaimed by owners less than 3% according to SAC
- Cats have medical and wellness needs specific to their species and are particularly vulnerable to illness and disease when stressed or injured

Sheltering practices must be updated to meet the specific needs of the species and address the problems above.

At its core, the HASS model of community-centered animal sheltering extends services to both animals and people, cultivating greater engagement with the communities supported by participating shelters. The traditional model to remove cats from their homes and habitats is replaced with providing cats, and the people who care for them, services that allow cats to stay in their homes and habitats whenever possible.

The below organizations and the leadership of HASS stands in support of community cat programs that include the following:

- Targeted, high-volume Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
- Shelter-Neuter-Return (SNR, Return to Field/RTF, Return to Home/RTH) as the default live outcome for all cats without identification who are found outdoors, regardless of temperament, who are evaluated and determined to be thriving.
- Return of kittens to their original outdoor home when evaluated and determined necessary in consideration of organizational resources to promote maximum lifesaving.
- Return of friendly cats to the neighborhood where they were found which offers the greatest chance of reunification if owned, or to (often multiple) caretakers with deep bonds to the animal¹.
- Working within the confines of current local laws and contracts but striving to make changes that better embrace and support these concepts.

These practices respect the unique needs of cats, lead to the greatest opportunity for reunification with families, and keep pets and families together by ending the removal of outdoor pets from marginalized communities. With clear, supporting research illustrating these practices are in the best interest of cats, the below members of HASS stand in support of these data-driven, humane, community cat initiatives and the organizations across the world that embrace them.

¹ Lord, L.K., et al., Search and identification methods that owners use to find a lost cat. J Am Vet Med Assoc, 2007. 230(2): p. 217-20.