

Vietnamese 'Year of the Cat'

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As pointed out in *Cat Crazy*, a recent CBC documentary, the issue of cat over-population is not an animal problem but a people problem. To the dismay of feline lovers everywhere, cats are viewed by a substantial proportion of society as a disposable pet. For example, if your current cat is run over, gets lost or simply disappears, you can always get another one. People also mistakenly believe that cats are like wild animals and can fend for themselves when left outdoors or allowed to run loose. It is this attitude of disposability and the lack of worth given to cats that contribute to the cat over-population problem.

This is where the Year of the Cat comes in. Since 2011 marks the Vietnamese Year of the Cat, it is especially appropriate that a new campaign has begun with the welfare of cats in mind.

Modelled after a highly successful education campaign created by the Hamilton-Burlington SPCA in 2008, The Year of the Cat program is designed to raise awareness of the value of cats and address the issue of over population. The Year of the Cat is the first project by a new national volunteer organization called Care for Cats. The City of Calgary, together with the Calgary Humane Society and MEOW Foundation, has joined this Canada-wide project. Closer to home, Saskatoon SCAT Street Cat Rescue will also be participating in the Year of the Cat initiative.

Care for Cats wants to change attitudes to increase the value of owned, homeless and feral cats in Canadian communities. Public education programs and support materials will present an influential and unified message about the significance of responsible cat ownership. By making these supports available in Canadian communities, it is hoped that new appreciation of cats will lead to more responsible pet ownership. Responsible pet ownership (licensing, neutering or spaying, keeping cats indoors or

on a leash) will help decrease the numbers of healthy adoptable animals that are euthanized each year. (Care for Cats).

The Care for Cats public education campaign is derived from facts and statistics from the 2008 Business of Urban Animals Survey commissioned by PetLynx Corporation for the International Summits for Urban Animal Strategies. These statistics confirm that dogs tend to receive better overall veterinary care than cats and that the importance placed on cats is significantly lower than that of dogs.

Some statistics from the survey revealed:

- There are 8.5 million cats in Canada - 36% of Canadian homes have one or more cats.
- 50% of these cats did not receive regular veterinary care in the past 12 months.
- Less than 25% of Canadian cats have permanent identification, such as tattoos or microchips.
- 41% either haven't been vaccinated in the last four years or have never been vaccinated at all.
- 54% of people who owned cats that were not currently spayed or neutered reported that they were "unlikely" to have their cats altered in the coming year. (Calgary Humane Society news release).

Cats are also more likely to come into a shelter than dogs, and often take longer to adopt out than their canine counterparts. Many people are not interested in adopting an older cat from a shelter, further contributing to the over-population problem.

Cat over-population is a reality in most communities. The problem is growing numbers of not just strays, but also other free-roaming pet cats. The strays are likely to go unneutered or unspayed, and therefore to reproduce like mad. Fertile female cats produce an average of two litters of

four to six kittens per year. (Live Science April 2008). Unspayed and unneutered cats that roam contribute to the over-population problem by giving birth to unwanted litters year after year. Owners of male cats that roam free may never know how many litters "Fluffy" has fathered.

In Canada, the cat over-population problem is mainly due to irresponsible pet owners letting their cats roam free without identification and/or without being spayed or neutered. The challenge lies in convincing people that cats have intrinsic value and to give them the same level of care and consideration allotted to our canine companions.

For more information:
http://www.careforcats.ca/year_of_the_cat/2011_year_of_the_cat.html
SCAT Street Cat Rescue
<http://www.streetcat.ca/index.html>

SPCA News Home 4 The Holidays 2010 has wrapped up!

The Saskatoon SPCA participated in the Home 4 The Holidays Campaign, which ran Oct. 1, 2010 through Jan. 4, 2011, in the hopes of placing 1.5 million pets into homes throughout North America and around the world.

The Saskatoon SPCA had a goal to adopt out 300 animals for the 2010 Campaign.

They are thrilled to announce that they have surpassed this goal by 83 animals, giving a grand total of 383 animals who found a home this Holiday Season!

Celebrating its 12th anniversary, Iams Home 4 the Holidays - among the world's most successful pet adoption programs - includes more than 2,500 worldwide partner animal organizations that are dedicated to helping place orphaned dogs and cats into happy, loving homes.

The Saskatoon SPCA wishes to thank all of its staff as well as the many supporters and volunteers who helped make this possible. For more information, visit www.saskatoon-sPCA.com



Meet Toby

TOBY WAS ADOPTED FROM THE SASKATOON ANIMAL SHELTER on November 22 by our Editor. She says he has brought so much fun into their family. He is a real clown who loves to do tricks to get noticed and to make people laugh.