Annex Cat Rescue

Annual Highlights

Year in review: 2002

Version: August 2003

Annex Cat Rescue

Cat Adoption with a Difference

Background:

The Annex Cat Rescue was founded in 1997 by people living in the Annex neighbourhood of downtown Toronto who had a common interest in the well-being of homeless cats in the area. Initially, the focus was on finding homes for the kittens of a group of feral cats, and providing the adults with food. As the original volunteers soon discovered, the size of the problem is very large. Shortly thereafter, a network of foster homes was established to take in kittens and stray adults cats and an adoption service was started. In an attempt to cut down on the number of unwanted kittens and breeding stray and feral cats, adult cats were trapped, spayed or neutered and then released if they were too wild to adopt.

Over the years, the geographic area in which the Annex Cat Rescue operates, and its volunteers live, has increased. We now look after most of the feral cats in the Chinatown and Kensington Market neighbourhoods, and take cats into care from anywhere in the Greater Toronto Area.

Since its founding, the Annex Cat Rescue has fostered and adopted over 800 cats and kittens, and helped find homes for many more cats that have been taken in by people who have contacted us looking for assistance.

In 1999, the Annex Cat Rescue was granted official charitable status. During this process, a Constitution and Board of Directors were implemented. At this time, the philosophy and mission of the charity were formalized. Our Charitable registration number is 871653945 RR 0001.

At present, Annex Cat Rescue has over 50 active volunteers. This includes 20 who are fostering cats, 15 who work with feral cats (feeding, trapping), five who manufacture catnip toys that we sell as part of our fundraising activities, and others who help with finance and administration needs. A small number of volunteers do more than one of the preceding activities. There are also a few others who do volunteer work for Annex Cat Rescue on an infrequent basis, such as assisting in major fundraising activities.

Philosophy:

The Annex Cat Rescue adheres strictly to a “no kill” policy. By this, we mean that no cat coming into our care is euthanized for any reason (other than for purely compassionate grounds – such as severe injury or terminal illness). This policy also means that we occasionally take on responsibility for cats that cost us considerable amounts in veterinary expenses. We have a related policy that if an adoption does not work out for some reason (a rare event), the Annex Cat Rescue will welcome the animal’s return, and place it in foster care until another adoptive home is found.

The Annex Cat Rescue does not operate an animal shelter. All of our cats are fostered in volunteers’ homes. Through this approach, we ensure that the cats live in a normal home environment before they are adopted. This prevents many behavioral problems that can develop when animals are caged for long periods. As an added benefit, our foster volunteers gain an understanding of the cat’s individual temperament, which is extremely useful in matching prospective adopters to available cats.

The Annex Cat Rescue also has a strong commitment to local community volunteerism. While we take in as many needy cats as we have space for and can afford, we also encourage others to get involved in solving cat overpopulation problems in their own neighbourhoods in a humane and effective manner.

Highlights of 2002

Fostering and Adoptions:

In 2002, Annex Cat Rescue volunteers fostered and adopted out over 120 cats and kittens. This was somewhat less than in 2001, a drop that was caused by a shortage of general donations and a general slowing in adoptions. In years prior to 2001, we averaged 100 cats per year.

The vast majority of the cats that were fostered and adopted were kittens of feral and stray cats that were born in garages and under porches and decks and where the residents called us for help.

About ten of the cats and kittens that were fostered and adopted were kittens of feral cats that our feral cat volunteers manage, or were tame strays that found there way to the places where feral cats are regularly fed. This continues a decline from previous years, due to our success in spaying and neutering the adult members of feral colonies that we manage.

Most of the cats and kittens that we took into our care last year would not have lived had they been taken to a shelter that does not have a No Kill policy. Most of the kittens that we took in had to be treated for respiratory and eye infections before being adopted. We also took in pregnant cats that would have been deemed too wild by many shelters. As well, we took on a few cats with serious health problems that required considerable recuperation.

Annex Cat Rescue also helped find homes for over 30 stray cats and kittens that other people took in and asked us for help in placing. In some cases, we covered the veterinary costs for these cats before they were adopted.

Some highlights:
As in previous years, we took in some orphaned kittens that needed to be bottle-raised. We had considerable success (and luck) in that all survived and were adopted.

Many of the kittens that we rescued needed socialization with humans before being adopted. These were kittens that were somewhat older at the time they were picked up (usually trapped in these cases) and had not had any prior human contact. In some cases the socialization period extended to months before the kitten was considered “adoptable”. All of these kittens were eventually adopted.

Some of our long-term foster cats were adopted in 2002. These were cats that had spent over a year in foster homes. Most were “less than tame” cats or cats with behavioral problems, and required considerable adjustment prior to being adopted.

I have attached some photos and stories of a sample of the cats and kittens that Annex Cat Rescue helped last year.

Feral Cat Program:

In 2002, there was an increase in the number of volunteers working with feral cats. This has allowed us to increase the regularity of feeding in the Annex, Chinatown and Kensington Market areas. We have also been able to increase the number of feral cat colonies that we manage.

With more volunteers, we also greatly increased the number of feral cats that we trapped-spayed/neutered-released (a process known as TNR) over previous years. This has reduced the number of kittens born in feral cat colonies that we manage, which has stabilized the populations in those areas. We also spayed many feral cats for which we were given donations by non-members who look after them. As well, when we take into foster care a litter of kittens that we are called about, we are better able to trap and spay the mother on a timely basis.

We currently look after more than 50 feral cats in Toronto. Annex Cat Rescue volunteers distributed over 2,500 kg of dry cat food and 300 cases of canned cat food to feral colonies over the course of the year. As there are never quite enough funds to pay for this food, much of the food was contributed by the volunteers themselves.

Public Relations and Fundraising:

In 2002, the Annex Cat Rescue conducted, or participated in more fundraising events than in previous years. However, most of these events were of a smaller nature than some in the past.

We held a lawn sale at which we sold donated items. This raised $3,000.

We participated in street festivals on Bloor Street and in Cabbagetown. The events raised about $800. Although the amount of money raised at events like this is small, it allows our volunteers to spend time discussing our programs with the public. Many volunteers have joined Annex Cat Rescue through these events.

Annex Cat Rescue volunteers also participated in two craft shows at which we sold catnip toys and gift cards. Over $550 in sales and donations were raised during three weekends in December.

Annex Cat Rescue volunteers manufacture catnip toys, which are sold at some veterinary offices. In 2002, we were able to secure more locations that would sell the toys, and were able to increase our earnings through this means.

In 2002, Annex Cat Rescue also received corporate grants from the Bank of Montreal and Bell Canada.

A summary of out financials is included later in this document.

In 2002, Annex Cat Rescue was written up in the Eye Weekly newspaper. Our website, which became operational in 2000, attracted considerably more attention than in earlier years.

All of the above increased public awareness of Annex Cat Rescue, increased the number of adoption calls, and also greatly increased the number of calls from people asking for help with stray cat problems.

Administrative:

In 2002, the Annex Cat Rescue web site (www.annexcatrescue.on.ca) was expanded to provide more educational material and a few more success stories. The web site has become a major source for adoption inquiries. This has allowed us to reduce our reliance on newspaper advertising, which has been important because advertising rates have increased. The website is still maintained entirely by volunteers.

The only major administrative expenses that Annex Cat Rescue has are a telephone number with voice mail and hosting of our web site. Both are used to support our efforts to find foster and adoptive homes. We also occasionally incur expenses for postage and meeting room rentals.

Financial:

The Annex Cat Rescue began 2002 with a healthy bank balance. This was important, because our largest intake of kittens and cats (and associated vet bills) is in the spring and early summer, whereas many of our donations are received later in the year.

Annex Cat Rescue both raised and spent considerably more in 2002 than in 2001 or 2000. The most consistent aspect of our financials is that over 75% of our expenses are for veterinary services.

While donations in 2002 were higher than in prior years, much of the increase was donations for the trapping/spaying of specific feral cats for which members of the public requested assistance. This offset some of the increase in veterinary expenses, but did not fund veterinary work for foster cats.

In 2002, our expenses were higher than revenues. We ended the year with cash in the bank, although less than in prior years.

Shown below is a summary of revenues and expenses for 2002, with figures from 2001 and 2000 for comparison:

Revenues	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**
Donations	$12,400	$19,700	$22,585
Membership Dues	120	320	290
Money boxes	660	1,700	3,819
Fundraising	4,600	5,150	4,230
Adoption Fees	2,610	7,340	6,305
Total Revenue	20,390	34,210	37,229

Expenses			
Administrative	$200	$515	$670
Advertising	375	575	762
Veterinary Services	13,430	23,900	31,162
Fundraising Expenses	900	1,160	1,538
Feral Cat Supplies	1,600	2,220	2,500
Fostering Expenses	1,020	2,600	3,382
Miscellaneous	50	115	592
Total Expenses	17,575	31,085	40,606

Some of the cats and kittens that we took into our care in 2002.

Pepper was found on the side of a road. He had been hit by a car and had dragged himself to the curb. Pepper needed hip surgery to repair damage to a back leg but he will always have a limp. Despite a long recuperation in a small kennel in a foster home, he maintained a sweet temperament. Pepper was adopted shortly after his recovery.

Edwina was born to a feral mother in North York. The owner of the house called us when the kittens started dying. Edwina is one of three survivors from the six-kitten litter. She spent a few days on intravenous and then needed to be hand-raised in a foster home. She improved quickly and was later adopted.

Gloria was an adolescent feral who was intended for trap-spay/neuter-release (TNR). She had a respiratory infection and after some tests it was determined that she had FIP, a highly communicable and potentially fatal viral infection. It would be unethical to release her with this disease, so she was taken into foster care. She has since been adopted.

None of these cats would be alive if not rescued by Annex Cat Rescue volunteers.

Panama was found in a window well behind an apartment building. It was quickly evident that she had a broken leg. X-rays revealed that both front legs were broken. Panama had surgery to put plates in both legs and she endured a long recovery. She has been adopted and is doing very well in her new home.

Mitch was a stray cat who found his way into a feral colony in Chinatown about four years ago. He adapted well and was being monitored by Annex Cat Rescue volunteers. In November 2002, Mitch was hit by a car. After a search by many volunteers, he was found and taken to a vet. He was too weak for surgery, so spent time gaining strength in a foster home. By then, it was too late to save his leg, so it was amputated. When he fully recovered in the spring of 2003, he was adopted.