

# Annex Cat Rescue

## Annual Highlights



*Year in review:* 2003  
*Version:* August 2004

## **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 adult 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.

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## **Highlights of 2003**

### **Fostering and Adoptions**

In 2003, Annex Cat Rescue volunteers fostered and adopted out over 110 cats and kittens. This was a similar number to 2002, and somewhat less than 2001. 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. As well, there were about 20 kittens born in foster homes to mothers that were taken in while pregnant.

Very few of the kittens that were fostered and adopted were kittens of feral cats that our feral cat volunteers manage. 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.

Annex Cat Rescue also helped find homes for 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. Although most survived, a few were too weak or sick when rescued to recover with the best veterinary care that could be arranged.

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”. Most were adopted relatively quickly, although some of these kittens were still in foster care at the end of 2003.

A few of our long-term foster cats were adopted in 2003. These were cats that had spent over a year in foster homes. Most were “less than tame” cats or cats with behavioural problems, and required considerable adjustment prior to being adopted.

Some photos and stories of a sample of the kittens that Annex Cat Rescue helped last year are attached at the end of this report.

## **Feral Cat Programs**

### **Trap-Neuter/Spay and Return**

In 2003, we increased the number of feral cats that we trapped-neutered/spayed-returned (a process known as TNR) over previous years. Since we have stabilized the population of feral colonies that we manage, we were able to assist callers who look after other feral colonies. Many of these non-members donated the cost to have these cats spayed or neutered.

The Annex Cat Rescue received a grant from PetSmart at the end of 2003, for our spay and neuter program. This grant is to be used exclusively for our Trap-Neuter/Spay-Return program for feral or homeless cats as well as cats in our foster program.

### ***Overview***

In previous years, the spaying and neutering of feral cats had been done on an “ad hoc” basis, as the need arises and as funds permitted. With the PetSmart grant, our goal is to TNR 100 feral and stray cats. This doubles the number of cats that we have fixed in 2002 and 2003.

The TNR program commenced in the spring of 2004, and the progress of the program will be monitored at six months into the project and at the end of the year.

Our Trapping Coordinator authorizes the feral cats and colonies to be placed in the TNR program. Over the years, ACR has dealt with many callers who cared for feral colonies and needed our help to place feral kittens (6-8 weeks) in our foster homes but, financially, they could not control the breeding of more unwanted kittens. We have added some of these colonies to ACR’s program.

### **Feral Colony Feeding Program**

In 2003, 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 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 during the year. As there are never quite enough funds to pay for this food, the volunteers themselves contributed much of the food.

## **Public Relations and Fundraising**

In 2003, the Annex Cat Rescue participated in fundraising events. However, some of these events were of a smaller nature than some in the past.

We participated in the Cabbagetown Street Festival. The event raised about \$360. 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 our handmade catnip toys and catnip pillows. A corporate donation made by Cadbury Chocolate helped to increase our funding with their chocolate bars, which were sold for a small donation at these events. Over \$550 in sales and donations was raised during three weekends in December 2003.

New volunteers who joined the Annex Cat Rescue in 2003 manufacture hundreds of catnip toys and a few dozen catnip pillows (“Purr Pads”), which are sold at some veterinary offices and a few local businesses. In 2003, we increased the requested donation for our catnip toys by 33% and our catnip pillows by 20%.

In 2003, Annex Cat Rescue also received corporate grants from the Bank of Montreal, Bell Canada and PetSmart.

A summary of ACR’s financial information is included later in this document.

In 2003, Annex Cat Rescue was interviewed by the radio show *Animal Voices* on CIUT. Our website, which became operational in 2000, was linked to the website Petfinder.com, a site for pets that are in need of homes. We are located under the Shelter and Rescue Groups section.

In 2003, our kitten adoption poster was updated with new photos of rescued kittens, and then distributed along with our brochures, to pet supply stores, veterinary offices, and local stores by volunteers.

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 and feral cat colonies.

## **Administrative**

In 2003, the Annex Cat Rescue web site ([www.annexcatrescue.on.ca](http://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 is important because advertising rates continue to increase. The web site is still maintained entirely by volunteers.

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

## **Financial**

The Annex Cat Rescue began 2003 with a rather small bank balance, and therefore a difficult situation financially, since our largest intake of kittens and cats (and associated vet bills) is in the spring and early summer, while many of our donations are received later in the year. However, through numerous fundraising efforts we received a few sizeable grants and we were able to end the year in a better financial position.

Annex Cat Rescue raised considerably more funds in 2003 than in previous years. But since, throughout the 2003 year, we had to take a more conservative approach with the kitten and cat intake, our expenses were lower than in 2002. The most consistent aspect of our finances remains that the majority of our expenses are for veterinary services.

Donations in 2003 were higher than in prior years, and much of the increase was due to 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.

Shown below is a summary of revenues and expenses for 2003, with figures from previous years for comparison:

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>
Donations	\$24,487	\$22,585	\$19,700	\$12,400
Membership Dues	200	290	320	120
Money boxes	4,396	3,819	1,700	660
Fundraising	2,812	4,230	5,150	4,600
Adoption Fees	6,610	6,305	7,340	2,610
<i>Total Revenue</i>	\$38,505	37,229	34,210	20,390
<b>Expenses</b>				
Administrative	\$862	\$670	\$515	\$200
Advertising	888	762	575	375
Veterinary Services	23,145	31,162	23,900	13,430
Fundraising Expenses	1150	1,538	1,160	900
Feral Cat Supplies	1496	2,500	2,220	1,600
Fostering Expenses	6539	3,382	2,600	1,020
Miscellaneous	650	592	115	50
<i>Total Expenses</i>	34,730	40,606	31,085	17,575

**These are some of the cats and kittens that we took into our care in 2003:**



**Roger, David and Edwina** are three orphan kittens that we rescued from the west end when they were about three weeks old. They were born to a feral mother who may have abandoned them or had been killed. A foster parent fed these kittens every 4-6 hours with with small amount of food though a syringe until they could eat on their own. Without this intervention they would have died. Despite their rough beginnings, they all did very well and now have good homes.



**Hubert, Kai and Guinevere** were kittens born to a feral mother near Dufferin and Dupont Streets. Their mother had her litter last spring inside the roof of the back porch of a house. After quite a bit of rain, the ceiling underneath rotted through and the kittens fell through into the back of the house. They were about four weeks old at the time. They were put in a foster home and hand fed. A few days later, their two siblings were found by a neighbour and were reunited. All of the kittens had health problems. One of the siblings died, but the other four survived after a good deal of veterinary care and care by the foster home. They eventually regained their health and were adopted.



These kittens were surrendered to us by a woman who had let her unneutered male and female cat breed three times. She called us when the second litter was already four months old and the original female cat was very pregnant again. We found homes for the four-month-old kittens and for the ones pictured (the kittens from the third litter). We then had a volunteer drive the woman to a vet with the male cat to get him neutered. When the female was ready to be spayed, we also made sure the procedure was done. We shudder to think how many more kittens this person would have been responsible for because, of the six kittens we placed, three were females.