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## **AWA launches “Community Cats” - a month long campaign to spay and neuter free-roaming cats**

*Sponsored by PetSmart Charities, “Community Cat” provides free spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccinations for feral and stray cats*

March 1, 2016

Voorhees, NJ: – During the month of April, Animal Welfare Association (AWA) will offer no-cost spay and neuter surgeries, plus free rabies vaccinations as part of “Community Cats,” [PetSmart Charities®](#) spay/neuter campaign to alter free-roaming cats. If left unaltered, unowned feral and stray cats produce large quantities of unwanted kittens each spring, flooding local animal shelters and leading to higher euthanasia rates. By taking a proactive approach and getting the cats fixed now, AWA will help lessen the impact of the coming kitten season.

Spaying and neutering is one of the most effective ways to reduce the homeless pet population and is safe for kittens as young as eight to 10 weeks old, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. Spaying a female cat before the first heat cycle can be beneficial, improving the health of the cat by reducing the risk of certain reproductive cancers and infections.

“Female cats can have as many as three litters a year, and kittens can breed as young as four months old,” says Maya Richmond, Executive Director of AWA. “Most people don’t want to see the cats they’re feeding get pregnant over and over again, so our **“Community Cats”** campaign will serve as a gentle reminder to caretakers of free-roaming cat colonies to catch and sterilize their cats.”

This special free rate is available to all residents of South Jersey. *Residents feeding free-roaming cats who wish to take advantage of this offer must mention the **“Community Cat”** campaign when scheduling their appointment.* Appointments are based on availability. For more information or to schedule an appointment, interested persons should visit [www.awanj.org](#) or call 856-424-2288.

**PetSmart Charities’ “Community Cats”** campaign will provide \$648,293 to spay/neuter clinics across the United States to fund affordable, high-quality spay and neuter surgeries for more than 13,820 free-roaming cats during the month of April.

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**About AWA**

Animal Welfare Association, a private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, in 2015 over 23,000 pets were served through AWA programming. AWA is South Jersey's leader in progressive companion animal care.

**About PetSmart Charities:**

PetSmart Charities, Inc. is a nonprofit animal welfare organization that saves the lives of homeless pets. More than 400,000 dogs and cats find homes each year through our adoption program in all PetSmart® stores and our sponsored adoption events. PetSmart Charities grants more money to directly help pets in need than any other animal welfare group in North America, with a focus on funding spay/neuter services that help communities solve pet overpopulation. PetSmart Charities is a 501(c)(3) organization, separate from PetSmart, Inc.