



Feline Intake By Appointment

A quick guide to assist you in creating a feline waiting list for your organization

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A Brief History

In the spring of 2010 we at the SPCA Serving Erie County found ourselves facing the very same problem that we had been facing for years-more cats and kittens coming through our doors than we could possibly care for. This resulted in overcrowding, disease and possible euthanasia of healthy cats due to space.

We finally decided enough was enough. We simply HAD to find another way! And so our cat list was born! The concept itself was simple, but to be able to get the community on board was another story.

How Do I Get The Community On Board?

BE UP FRONT! A press release should be sent to local press (see Press Release Sample, page 17), and a point person should be designated to speak to the reasons for creating a list. Also announce on your Facebook, web page and any other social media tools your organization may use.

Consider placing signs at your shelter or have staff members wear buttons that say "Ask me about our cat intake waiting list!" This gives your staff an opportunity to speak to members of the public about your life saving efforts!

The idea of a feline waiting list was initially met with some frustration by community members looking to re-home their cats. This was expected given the fact that our shelter had thus far been an open-admission facility, and no call ahead was ever needed.

Within a relatively short period of time, however, we could see both the owners and the community, begin to accept and understand the reason for the list. This was largely due to patient and empathetic conversations with staff members, who explained that the list was created as a means to eliminate the need to euthanize healthy cats for space, to keep cats healthy while at the shelter, and given that, we could all but guarantee that their healthy, friendly cat would be placed in to a new home. What owner wouldn't want that??

How Do I Design My Waiting List?

This largely depends on any statistics you may want to gather from your waiting list.

When our list was implemented, we wanted to gather some specific information to help us become more proactive in designing future programs (i.e. spay/neuter programs, Pets For Life initiative, etc.). Thus, we designed our waiting list to make it as easy as possible to pull that information.

Currently, we collect the following information from our waiting list every month:

- ❖ Surrender Reason
- ❖ Individual calls received per surrender reason
- ❖ Cats that are spayed/neutered over the age of 6 months
- ❖ Age range of cats being surrendered
- ❖ Cat list outcomes (came in, rehomed, kept, etc.)
- ❖ Average time on list

This information is gathered on a monthly basis, and entered into a Microsoft Excel document. Cumulative statistics are also compiled at the end of every fiscal year. The information for July, 2012 is attached to the back of this booklet (see Pages 12-15).

Voicemails and Designated Phone Lines:

The SPCA utilizes two voicemail boxes for the Cat Admission Waiting List. 1 general mailbox (Admissions Waiting List), and 1 direct phone line.

All calls received at the SPCA regarding feline surrender are directed to the “Admissions Waiting List” mailbox. This particular mailbox does not ring to a specific phone. It is a mailbox within our phone system that allows the caller to leave a voicemail only.

The messages are checked once a day and the information (date/time the message was recorded, caller name, phone number, reason for call) is recorded in a call log. You can purchase a call log at your local office supply store. An example of our call log is provided for your reference (See page 16).

The calls are then returned in the order in which they were received. All calls are returned within 24 hours, if possible. The result of the return call is also logged in the call log (LM-left message, O.L. – On list, resolved etc).

When initial contact is made with the caller, they are provided with another phone number. This allows the caller to contact the Cat List Coordinator through the direct phone line. This eliminates calls to our general number, reduces frustration on the part of the caller, and streamlines our efforts with scheduling and future contact. The caller is asked to please use this phone line for any future contact (i.e. they have found alternative placement for the cat and wish to be removed from our waiting list, or they are inquiring about their current position on the list).

Basic Voicemail Scripts

The greeting on our general Waiting List voicemail is:

Thank you for calling the SPCA voicemail for an animal surrender appointment. If you are calling about surrendering a dog, or any injured animal, please call the main SPCA's main number _____ to speak with an SPCA representative.

At the present time, there is a waiting list to schedule an appointment for all animals other than dogs, to be evaluated for possible adoption. Please leave your name and phone number and a counselor will return your call as soon as possible.

The greeting on our designated Waiting List phone is:

You have reached the Animal Waiting List voicemail. Please leave your name, number and a brief message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Basic Information Exchanged:

On Initial Contact:

The Counselor obtains the following information:

- ✿ What Town do you live in? (we only serve Erie County)
- ✿ How Many cats do you wish to surrender?
- ✿ Why are they coming in to us?
 - When appropriate and available, we will always attempt to find alternatives to surrender (see Offering Alternatives).

The Counselor provides the following information to the caller:

- ✿ Average length of wait
- ✿ Their Individual confirmation number
 - This number is 4 digits long. The first number is the month; the numbers following go up in consecutive

order. Example: “2047” would tell us they were the 47th person to be added to our list in February.

- The caller is told to refer to this number ANY TIME they call. (This allows you to easily find them on the list).
- ✿ Explains to the caller that we will be calling to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

On secondary contact (when the owner is called to schedule an appointment):

The counselor shares what appointment dates/times are available. Once the owner picks the date/time that works best for them, the counselor provides the following information:

- ✿ Please download and fill out a feline surrender profile from our website.
- ✿ Please bring the cat in a carrier
- ✿ We ask for a \$15.00 surrender fee
- ✿ The owner has the option of leaving an additional \$15.00 medical deposit which ensures the owner will receive a phone call and have the option to pick up the cat in the event that mental/physical health decreases and the cat may be euthanized.
- ✿ Plan on the appointment lasting approximately 30 minutes.
- ✿ We do not do reminder calls and any no call/no show will be removed from the list.
- ✿ Bring medical records

Offering Alternatives:

Whenever possible, always provide alternatives to surrender (refer to the *Pets For Life* program by HSUS for some FANTASTIC ideas). In many cases, the reason for surrender is something that can be managed IF the owner is willing/able to put some effort in. Permanent surrender is the last option. Below are just a few examples.

- ❖ **House Soiling:** First and foremost, refer the owner to a veterinarian. House soiling can often be attributed to a treatable medical condition. If medical has been ruled out, offer an informational packet, along with a referral to a feline behaviorist to help manage the problem.
- ❖ **Landlord Issues/Move:** Providing a local listing of Pet Friendly housing will help pet owners find a place to live with their animals.
- ❖ **Behavioral Issues:** Provide a number to a feline behaviorist.
- ❖ **Spay/Neuter:** Provide information on low cost spay/neuter in your area. You will find that many owners will want to keep their cat if you can help them get their animal sterilized.

Be prepared to hear “2 Months!?! I can’t wait that long!” Providing the phone numbers to some additional local rescues in your area may offer the owner more options.

Do's and Don'ts?

We began with some trial and error. Here are some tips on what we have found to be both effective, and ineffective.

What WORKS: 1 or 2 people responsible for the list. This includes taking/returning the calls, documenting the information, and scheduling appointments.

What DIDN'T work: Too many cooks in the kitchen! We found that too often, calls were getting lost, messages were not returned, or information on available space was miscommunicated to the public. By cutting down on the number of people responsible for the list, you ensure that accurate information is shared.

What WORKS: Creating a document with fill-in-the-blank spaces. This ensures that all desired information is gathered, and nothing is left out. This is important for many reasons, including tracking, scheduling and statistics. (See Page 11)

What DIDN'T work: a notebook style list. It became difficult to read, and ultimately did not hold up to constant use. Pages routinely tore out and list entries were missed.

What WORKS: Having 1 phone (with its own number) dedicated to the cat list. This allows all calls pertaining to cat surrender to be directed to one line thus guaranteeing that messages will not be lost. Additionally, this allows a direct number to be left on any messages left for an owner.

What DIDN'T work: Owners being asked to call back the main shelter number. This created confusion on the part of the staff, and frustration on the part of the cat owner. Often times people returning our phone calls would end up speaking to a member of another department. Calls were often transferred and ultimately dropped.

What WORKS: Give priority to intact animals to prevent breeding, or S/N a cat and return it to the owner as a “foster” while waiting on the list.

What DIDN'T work: Allowing intact cats to remain on the list for an extended period of time. This allowed to uncontrolled breeding within the home, and often led to additional kittens being added to the list.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: *Don't people just dump cats at your door?*

A: No. The vast majority of people are genuinely happy to work with us to save lives.

Q: *What is happening to cats you don't take in? Isn't the number of strays going up?*

A: Actually, community statistics for the past three years using statistics from all the Maddie's partners in the community indicate overall we are taking in more cats. In 2010, the cat intake was 9,376 in Erie County. In 2012 the cat intake number for Erie County was 9700, an increase of 3.4%

Q: *Have you seen a reduction in euthanasia of healthy, treatable, and manageable cats?*

A: There have been no healthy cats euthanized in Erie County since 2008. In 2010, the year the SPCA began managing admissions, 237 cats and kittens that were treatable or manageable were euthanized. This past year that number was 28. That is a reduction of 88%!

Q: *Has managed admissions really helped with keeping illness and death at the shelter down for cats?*

A: Yes! Cats that died in our care dropped 41% from 2010 until 2012. URI numbers are confusing. In 2010, we had 858 cases of URI, in 2011 663, and last year 853.

Q: *Isn't the shelter criticized for "turning its back" on cats?*

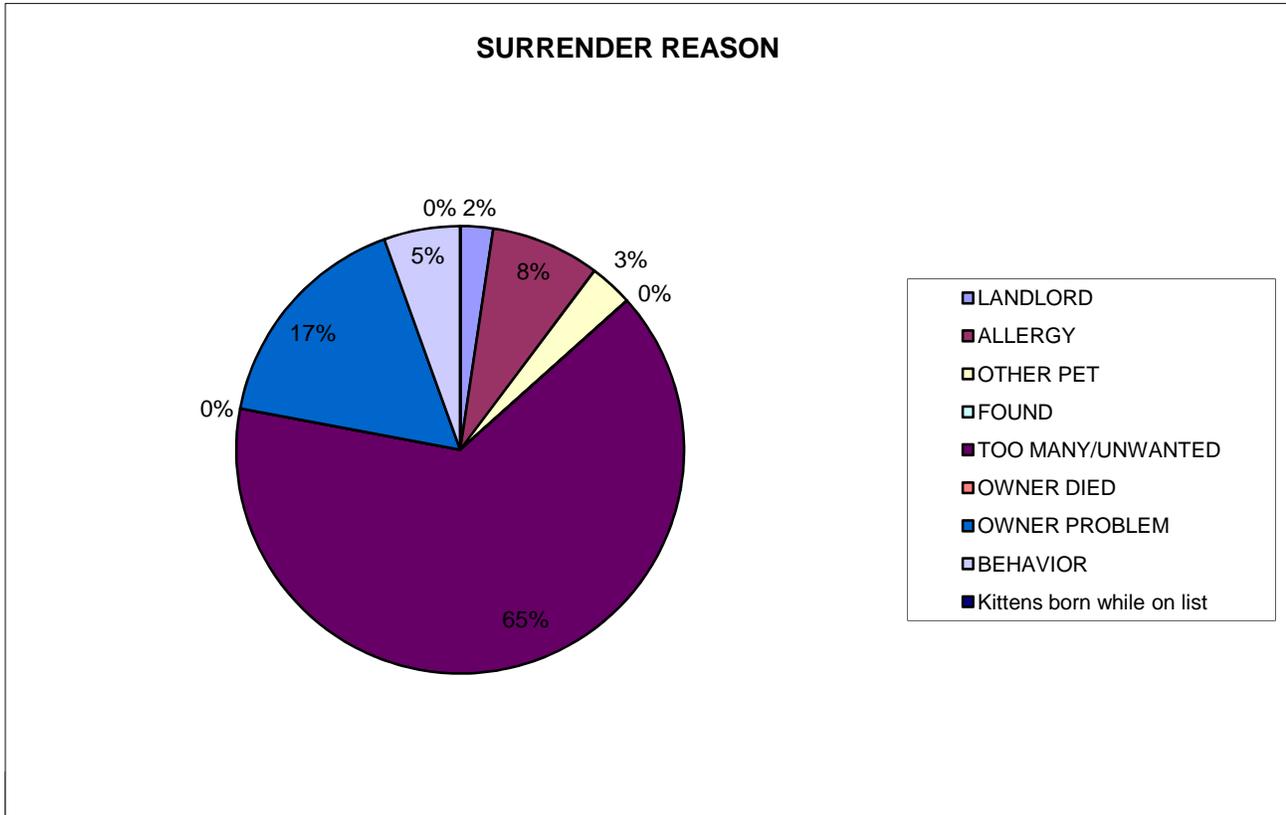
A: The public has not criticized us. Furthermore, it's hard to argue with facts. The simple fact is that overall, more cats are taken into shelters and rescues in Erie County now than were before we began managed admission. Death caused by illness, or cats euthanized that were treatable or manageable is VERY significantly reduced.

Q: *Is it really wise for a shelter to depart so far from its usual practices?*

A: That's a decision each organization must make for itself. Our feeling was that the practices we had used for the last decade or more were not producing positive results for cats. Are yours? We must look for alternative ideas to help cats as we are certainly as an 'industry,' failing cats on a daily basis.

<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf. #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone #:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone#:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone #:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone#:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone#:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone#:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	
<input type="text"/> Date <input type="text"/> Conf #	Name:	Scheduled:
	Phone#:	Surrender Reason:
	Cat info:	Outcome:
	Correspondence:	

SURRENDER REASON



SURRENDER REASON	Jul-12
LANDLORD	3
ALLERGY	10
OTHER PET	4
FOUND	0
TOO MANY/UNWANTED	82
OWNER DIED	0
OWNER PROBLEM	21
BEHAVIOR	7
Kittens born while on list	<u>0</u>
	162

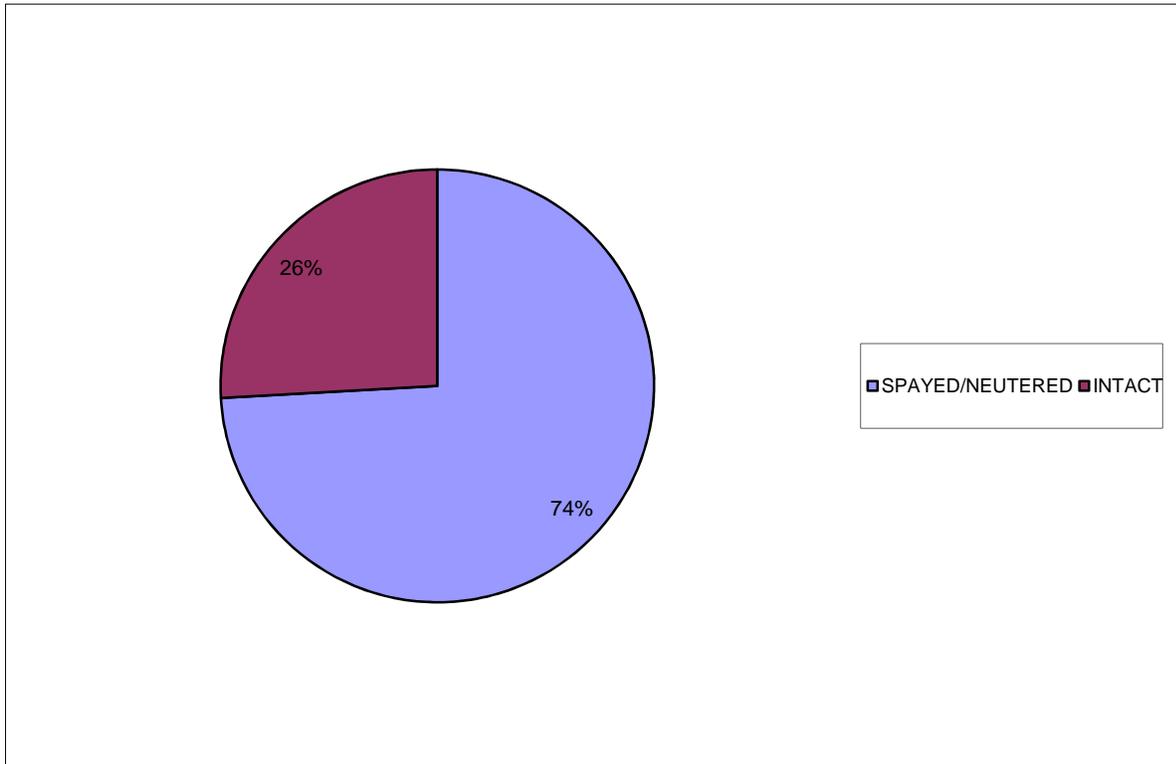
INDIVIDUAL CALLS	
LANDLORD	2
ALLERGY	9
OTHER PET	4
FOUND	0
TOO MANY/UNWANTED	17
OWNER DIED	0
OWNER PROBLEM	11
BEHAVIOR	<u>6</u>
	67

Too many/Unwanted also includes: Abandoned animals, out of control in-home breeding

Owner Problem includes: New baby, divorce, unable to afford, owner in nursing homes

SPAYED/NEUTERED CATS OVER 6 MONTHS

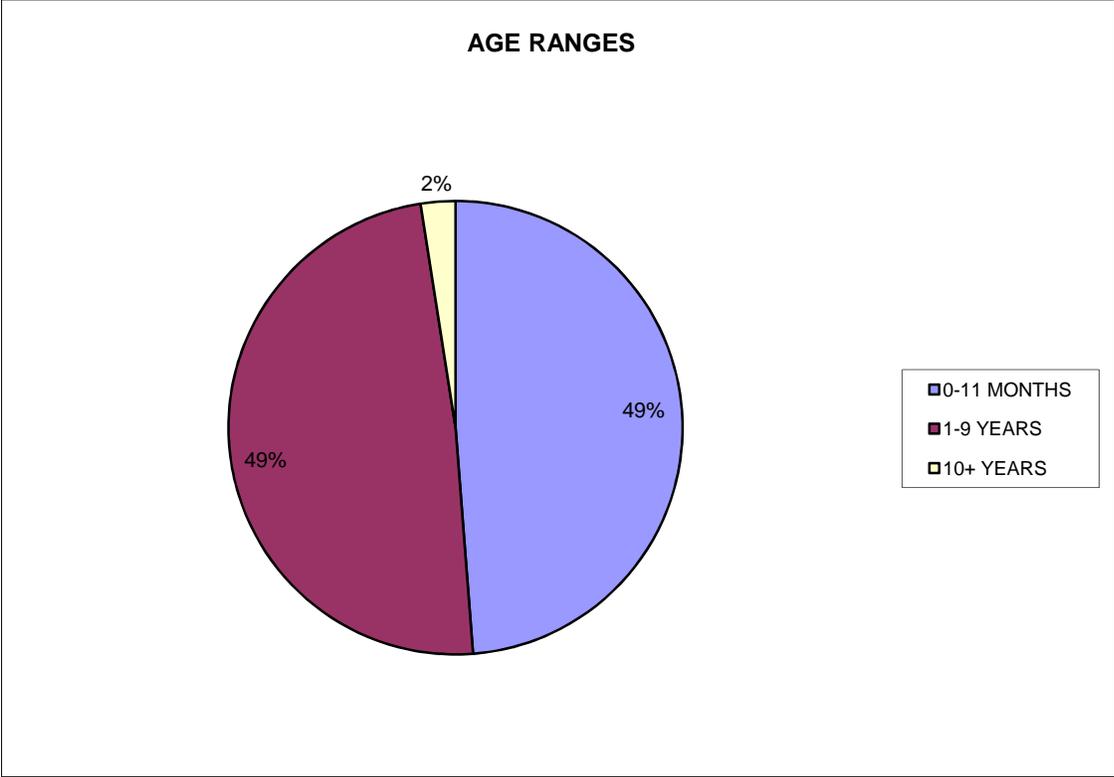
JULY 2012



SPAYED/NEUTERED	63
INTACT	22

AGE RANGES

JULY 2012

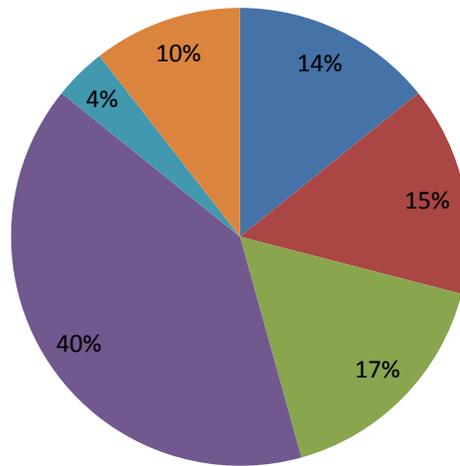


0-11 MONTHS	79
1-9 YEARS	79
10+ YEARS	4
	<hr/>
	162

OUTCOMES

Waiting List Outcomes July 2012

■ Rehomed ■ Keeping ■ Unreachable ■ Came In ■ No Show ■ Other Rescue



Rehomed	23
Keeping	24
Unreachable	27
Came In	65
No Show	6
Other Rescue	17
	<hr/>
	162

Date	Time	Name	Phone Number	Subject	Follow-up Required	Initials	✓
11/27	10:27	Lois	549-3878 389-3863	'1121'	11/27 scheduled		X
11/27	11:26	Dana	603-7707	already on list	11/27 scheduled		X
11/27	12:01	Christie	310-0052	already on list 1005'	11/27 LW		X
11/27	not	Marie McCarthy	622-3175	1 cat	11/27 11/29		X
11/27	9:25	Karen	393-3846	1 cat	11/27 11/23		X
11/27	10:03		741-8076	3 cats	11/27 LW		X
11/27	10:58	Christina	936-5977	2 cats	11/27 ^{w/ mom} LW		X
11/27	11:38		464-3727	stray cat	11/27 required		X
11/27	1:19	Dan	247-7952	3 cats spec cats	11/27 ^d 11/27		X
11/27	1:47	Christina	563-8859	2 cats	11/27 LW		X
11/27	Note		348-9548	stray cat	11/29 LW		X
11/28	Note	Tyson	300-8402	2 black kittens	11/29 LW		X
11/28	12:33		395-9801	Already on list	11/29 LW		X
11/28	9:20		257-9009 536-6822	Cats / kittens	11/29 LW		X
11/28	10:15	Mike Jackson	432-0751	2 cats	11/29 ^{ok} LW		X
11/28	2:36	Mike	472-4225		11/29 LW		X
11/28	not	Liz Duncan	634-6053	4 kittens	11/29 trying other		X
11/28	not	Linda	241-7333	wants to keep cat - ^{'1936'} not ^{1005'}	11/29		X
11/29	11:30		225-6550	keeping cat	11/29 removed		X
11/29	9:01	Nedra	604-7527	2 cats	11/29 keeping cats		X



SPCA Serving Erie County
205 Ensminger Road
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*716.875.7360 * YourSPCA.org*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2009

Contact: ~~Gina Browning~~
Public Relations Director
~~716-629-0505~~
~~716-812-0512(e)~~

SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY INSTITUTES CAT ADMISSION WAITING LIST

For the first time in its 143-year history, the SPCA Serving Erie County will now require appointments for feline surrenders at its 205 Ensminger Road, Tonawanda location.

"It's a drastic step, but one that we know will directly lead to our ability to save more cats' lives," says SPCA Coordinator of Animal Rescue and Admissions Amy Jaworski. "Up until now, people brought cats to us any day, any time...very often, entire litters were brought to us. Depending on the time of year, a typical day can mean 20 – 60 cat surrenders, and on a day during which only, say, 4 cats are adopted, we struggle."

In addition to cages at offsite adoption locations, the SPCA has a large foster care program through which volunteers house cats until there is adoptable cage space available. There is also a mobile adoption program, the Whisker Wag'n, which transports cats and other animals to several communities in Erie County, NY in the hopes of finding them homes.

"Our SPCA has made amazing progress in recent years, increasing the available space to temporarily house kitties," says Jaworski, "but the bottom line is, despite hundreds of foster homes, several offsite adoption outlets, and a fairly large shelter, we still couldn't come close to making room for even a small fraction of the number of cats surrendered to us. We realized that, in order to save the lives of these cats, we needed to take more control of how and when we admit them. It's the only way to keep them alive."

Community members interested in surrendering their felines to the SPCA will now need to call the SPCA, 716-875-7360, during normal business hours and ask to be placed on the cat surrender waiting list. At that time, an appointment will be made for the cat surrender. People with questions about this new SPCA policy can contact Jaworski at the number above, or visit the SPCA's popular website, YourSPCA.org.