

June 25, 2002

Dear Friend:

I am contacting you about an urgent problem you may not be aware of or have given much thought to. The problem concerns the population explosion and subsequent suffering of stray cats, sometimes known as alley cats, and more formally referred to as feral cats, and the plight of those dedicated persons attempting to care for them, ***the feral cat caretakers.***

Feral cats and kittens are historically domestic cats that have been abandoned, lost or abused. Succeeding generations struggle for survival in our storm drains, under abandoned houses, public, industrial and city properties, apartment building complexes and various other places where they can find meager shelter and food. Their potent enemies are indifference, starvation, disease, neglect and abuse. Feral cats form close knit families, called colonies, around discarded food sources and quickly procreate beyond their food supply, with tragic consequences.

There are an estimated 60-100 million feral cats in the U.S., with 17 million plus caretakers caring for approximately half of them. The remaining cats starve and reproduce at an alarming rate. The vast majority of kittens are born to feral mothers. ***In the city of Los Angeles alone, there are an estimated 3 million feral cats with an unknown number into the thousands of caretakers.***

Feral cat caretakers are the millions of people, of all ages and from all walks of life, who dedicate themselves, their personal finances and all too often, their social security checks to caring for the homeless cats. ***Many must make the difficult choice between food for their family and their family of feral cats and kittens.***

The feral cat caretaker's commitment involves care and nourishment for the lifetime of their feral cats and for those kittens that are not adopted. It is an emotionally and physically challenging experience for them, as they see, first hand, their struggle for survival under heartbreaking conditions.

After the cats have been trapped and neutered, it is the feral cat caretakers who provide the only link the cats and kittens have between survival and extinction. Under extremely challenging circumstances, they courageously forge ahead, implementing on-going population control, providing food, care, shelter, medicines, foster care, compassion and commitment. The financial and emotional burden of caring for homeless cats and kittens, miles from home, out of doors, rain or shine, is indescribable.

You would only need to look into the eyes of a starving kitten and nursing mother, to know what moves people to do things they never thought possible and make commitments that last a lifetime. They are the heroes whose dedication

and courage are essential, if the suffering is to end. It is time for them to be recognized and supported for the contribution they make to their communities.

As you read these pages, I invite you into the unknown and intensely moving world of feral cat caretaking. “The Story Behind the founding of the Feral Cat Caretakers’ Coalition” briefly recounts the experiences that compelled me to devote myself to feral cats as my life’s work. Anna, a 73 year old feral cat caretaker is one of thousands of examples that characterize the plight of elderly, low income persons whose hearts have been touched. Often viewed as eccentrics, vilified by the uninformed public and frequently sabotaged by property owners, many caretakers begin their journey with meager resources and without training.

Feral Cat Caretakers’ Coalition is dedicated to representing, unifying, educating and providing help to the thousands of resourceful and fragmented groups of people, who implement humane population control, and commit to responsible long-term feral cat and kitten care.

We invite you to spend time with the stories and information contained in this package. As you do, you will become keenly aware of the many needs and vast amount of work that must still be accomplished. The choices are great and varied. Volunteers, fund raising experience, grant writing, legal advice and public relations are vital if we are to continue to reach out and help. It is only through your kindness and generosity, that we will be able to care for those who care so much. The Feral Cat Caretakers need your compassion, understanding and commitment.

Our “Wish List” is enclosed for your kind consideration.

All donations are tax deductible. FCCC is a 501(c)(3) Public Charity nonprofit corporation. Tax ID#95-4781600. We look forward to your response and support. I would very much appreciate your completing and returning the “Donation and Involvement Opportunity”.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to meet with me personally.

Caring for those who care,

Dona Cosgrove Baker
Founder and President

