



P.O. Box 11535, Norfolk VA 23517 • Voice Mail : (757) 456-1354 • [www.ARTanimals.org](http://www.ARTanimals.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Group Combats Dog and Cat Overpopulation with Free Spay/Neuter Services

August 24, 2009 – Norfolk, VA - Citing statistics that show roughly 35% of dogs and 76% of cats entering Norfolk's animal control were euthanized last year,\* Animal Rescue of Tidewater (ART) launched its Spay/Neuter Ocean View project in May 2009. Sponsoring PETA's mobile SNIP (Spay Neuter Immediately Please) van one day a week solely for animals residing in Ocean View, the program was launched to remove the cost factor as an inhibitor to spay/neuter of animals. To date about 102 dogs and 233 cats (71 of which were feral) have been altered at no cost to their owners.

Planning for the program began in 2007 when ART approached the City Manager's office with a proposal for partnering to offer targeted spay/neuter. While awaiting a response, ART decided to privately fund a demonstration project to prove the value of this approach. After reviewing data on calls placed to animal control, results showed a high percentage of demand for officer response from the Ocean View neighborhood. Using the logic that an intense spay/neuter program in a neighborhood would reduce the number of animals in that area, it would follow that over time the need for animal control would decrease, and that shelter euthanasia rates would decrease too.

"The high volume of response proves that people want to do the right thing and get their animals fixed," explains Sarah Crawford, ART member and coordinator of the program. "With today's economy being uncertain and family budgets being tighter, it is sometimes hard for people to find the money for this procedure. By working together, we as a community can make a big difference for shelter animals."

Originally scheduled to run through July, the program has now been extended through September.

"We know that initial impact will be hard to see," says Debra Griggs, founder of ART, "but over time, we are very confident the data will support the need for more programs like this one and we hope the City will see the merits of spending monies for spay/neuter rather than millions year after year for housing and destroying homeless animals"

Costs of the program are significant at \$400/week – even with generously reduced rates from PETA - but necessary to stem the tide of unplanned births. Griggs hopes that the success of the program to date will prompt donations from the public to help continue in Ocean View, and/or to expand it to other Norfolk neighborhoods.

"While different formulas for calculating animal reproduction exist, we believe we have **potentially** prevented close to 1,000 unplanned births so far this year," explains Crawford. While curbing the companion animal population, it also means "less competition" for animals waiting in shelters to be adopted.

\*Norfolk Animal Care Center 2008 Animal Report to Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Total Dogs Euthanized – 970 of 2777; Total Cats Euthanized – 2154 of 2832.

---

Animal Rescue of Tidewater (ART) was founded in 1999. A 501(c)3 organization, ART advocates for improved animal welfare, and has identified spay/neuter as the underlying solution to animal population control. For more information, please visit [www.ARTanimals.org](http://www.ARTanimals.org) or call 757-456-1354.

CONTACT: Debra Griggs, 757-725-1705; [jasper550@cox.net](mailto:jasper550@cox.net)