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**Intake Policy 2024**

*Purpose:* At Shady’s Paw Animal Rescue, we have two programs for intake – rescue and TNR (trap – neuter – return). The primary goal of our rescue program is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for cats in need, ultimately working towards their successful adoption into loving homes.

This intake policy outlines the criteria and procedures for accepting cats into our rescue program. We also have a TNR program for community cats with a scheduled clinic every month for up to 10 cats. TNR cats are temporarily taken into the rescue for neuter, vaccination, and ear tipping, and then returned to their caretaker as “released to original colony”. When possible, TNR cats will be accepted under the rescue program rather than released if they are deemed to have potential to be adoptable, and there is the space and financial resources available to care for them.

**Reasons for Intake:**

1. **Abandonment or Stray Status:**
   * Cats found abandoned or wandering without an apparent owner.
   * Stray cats in need of medical attention or are at risk in their current environment.
2. **Owner Surrender:**
   * Individuals or families seeking to surrender their cat(s) due to unforeseen circumstances such as relocation, financial hardship, or health issues.
   * Cats surrendered due to behavioral challenges that the owner is unable to address.
3. **Medical Emergency:**
   * Cats requiring urgent medical attention or surgical intervention.
   * Emergency situations where the owner is unable to provide necessary medical care.
4. **Overcrowded Shelters/Rescues:**
   * Collaboration with other organizations facing overcrowding to alleviate the burden on their resources.
5. **(TNR Only – Temporary intake) Community Cats:**
   * Unowned cats being cared for by a volunteer caretaker that need to be vaccinated, neutered, and then returned to their colony.

**Intake Decision Criteria:**

1. **Health Assessment:**
   * An assessment of the overall health and well-being of the cat.
   * Determination of contagious diseases, parasites, and the need for immediate medical intervention.
2. **Behavioral Evaluation:**
   * Assessment of the cat's behavior to identify any potential challenges.
   * Compatibility with other cats and the ability to adapt to a foster environment.
3. **Resource Availability:**
   * Evaluation of the rescue's current capacity, including available space, finances, and volunteers.
   * Consideration of the cat's specific needs and the resources required to meet them.
4. **Adoption Potential:**
   * Evaluation of the cat's adoptability based on factors such as age, temperament, and any special requirements.
   * Consideration of the demand for specific traits or characteristics among potential adopters.
5. **Owner Counseling:**
   * For owner-surrendered cats, efforts to counsel owners on alternative solutions and address behavioral issues.
   * Collaboration with owners to explore all options before the decision to surrender is finalized.

**Process:**

1. **Application Submission:**
   * Individuals or organizations wishing to surrender or rescue a cat must submit a detailed application outlining the cat's history and current situation.
2. **Initial Assessment:**
   * Preliminary evaluation of the cat's condition based on the provided information.
3. **On-Site Evaluation:**
   * Scheduled appointment for a comprehensive health and behavioral assessment.
4. **Decision and Notification:**
   * The rescue team will review the evaluation results and decide on whether to accept the cat into the rescue program.
   * The owner or submitter will be promptly notified of the decision.
5. **Intake Process:**
   * If accepted, the cat will undergo any necessary medical treatments, vaccinations, and spaying/neutering.
   * Transition into the rescue's care and acclimatization to the foster environment.
   * For TNR only, cats will be housed temporarily while awaiting neuter appointment, in kennels if more than a day, in a trap if just overnight.

This intake policy aims to ensure the well-being of the cats we rescue, considering both their physical and behavioral needs, and facilitating successful adoptions to responsible and caring homes. It does not cover all the ways in which we help cats in need as it is not possible to intake every cat.

For the TNR Program, we have volunteers attempting to trap twice as many cats as we have available appointments so as not to have unused appointments wasted. Clinic appointments are “first trapped / first neutered”. Unsuccessful trappers can try again during the next clinic period.