

Sunday Column – June is Adopt a Cat Month To run 6.19.16

Between January 1 and May 31, 2013, Columbus Animal Care and Control took in 1,088 cats. This was in the days before the advent of the community cat program which initially launched in September of 2013. Prior to this, the City of Columbus was taking in well over 3,000 cats each year (most of them over the Summer months) and euthanizing 80 – 90% of them.

Fast forward to 2016 and cat intakes for the same period have dropped by 55% to 490 for the same five month period. This is great news and according to Dr. Emily Weiss of ASPCA Research and Development, this is a national trend.

More and more communities are finally getting smart about cats in the face of tremendous resistance. It defies logic that otherwise intelligent people fight these programs with everything they've got. They cite the number of birds and small mammals killed by cats as the main reason not to implement community cat programs. Yet the whole point of these programs is to reduce birthrates to the point that community cat colonies eventually die out.

In fact, I envision the day when we'll be begging for cats to keep our mouse and rat populations in check. Cats have lived with us humans for thousands of years and this has been to our advantage. They are remarkable and exquisite creatures with superhero abilities. Their senses of smell and hearing are many times that of dogs and they can leap six times their length in a single bound.

Cats are low maintenance pets. Most are cuddly yet don't overwhelm you with their emotional neediness. They don't need to go for a run after work or play fetch for hours on end. Cats come in an infinite variety of colors and patterns which you can find in short, medium and long hair length.

Despite the low number of intakes at Columbus Animal Care and Control, PAWS Humane has plenty of cats to choose from in case you are thinking of adding to your household. The best part is that to celebrate "Adopt a Cat Month", PAWS Humane is running a "Name Your Own Price" adoption special through the end of June.

If you came out to PAWS Humane today you would find 6 year old Lery, an orange tabby, and Sugar, a white cat with black splotches who is not quite a year old. Both are sweet and cuddly as well as being beautiful cats.

At PAWS Humane we frown on declawing cats for various reasons but sometimes a cat comes into our shelter who is already declawed and sometimes that is just what an adopter is looking for. Today that cat is Tubby, a seven year old, 15 pound brown tabby. That's a big cat! Yet he is playful and will even fetch. He's the total package.

If you are thinking of taking the plunge into pet keeping any one of these cats would make a wonderful starter pet. If you already have pets these guys seem to get along well with others and would make a great addition to your family.

Pets from most humane societies are already vaccinated, spay or neutered, and microchipped and most humane societies are celebrating "Adopt a Cat Month" with adoption specials. What better time to adopt a cat?

Bobbi Yeo lives in Opelika, AL. She is the CEO of PAWS Humane in Columbus, GA, an animal shelter and veterinary clinic offering low-cost spay/neuter and other services to the public. Email her at byeo@pawshumane.org with your comments and story ideas.