

**PAWS of  
Bainbridge & North Kitsap  
Cat Adoption  
Program Summary  
2008**

*Prepared by Marylou Zimmerman,  
Program Director*

## Overview

In 2008 PAWS took 381 cats and kittens into the Adoption Program. Cats came from a number of sources, from owned animals, unclaimed found pets, overflow from other rescue organizations, and feral kittens from trap/neuter/release (TNR) programs.

These cats were treated at a network of local veterinary clinics, receiving health checks, vaccines, parasite control and spay/neuter surgery. Those animals requiring additional care were treated prior to adoption.

Cats and kittens were cared for and socialized by a group of dedicated foster homes and the expert staff at our adult foster center, "The Cattery". The cats then rotated through the open concept Adoption Center which is staff by volunteer Adoption Counselors six days a week.

As of January 1, 2009 29 cats and kittens remained in the Adoption Census. In 2008, 352 animals exited the program through Adoption, PALS placement, Barn Cat Placement, Return-to-Owner and euthanasia. This is the 4th year that cats have been ranked on intake according to the Asilomar Scale, and once again, we did not euthanize any cats that were not classified as unhealthy/unadoptable.

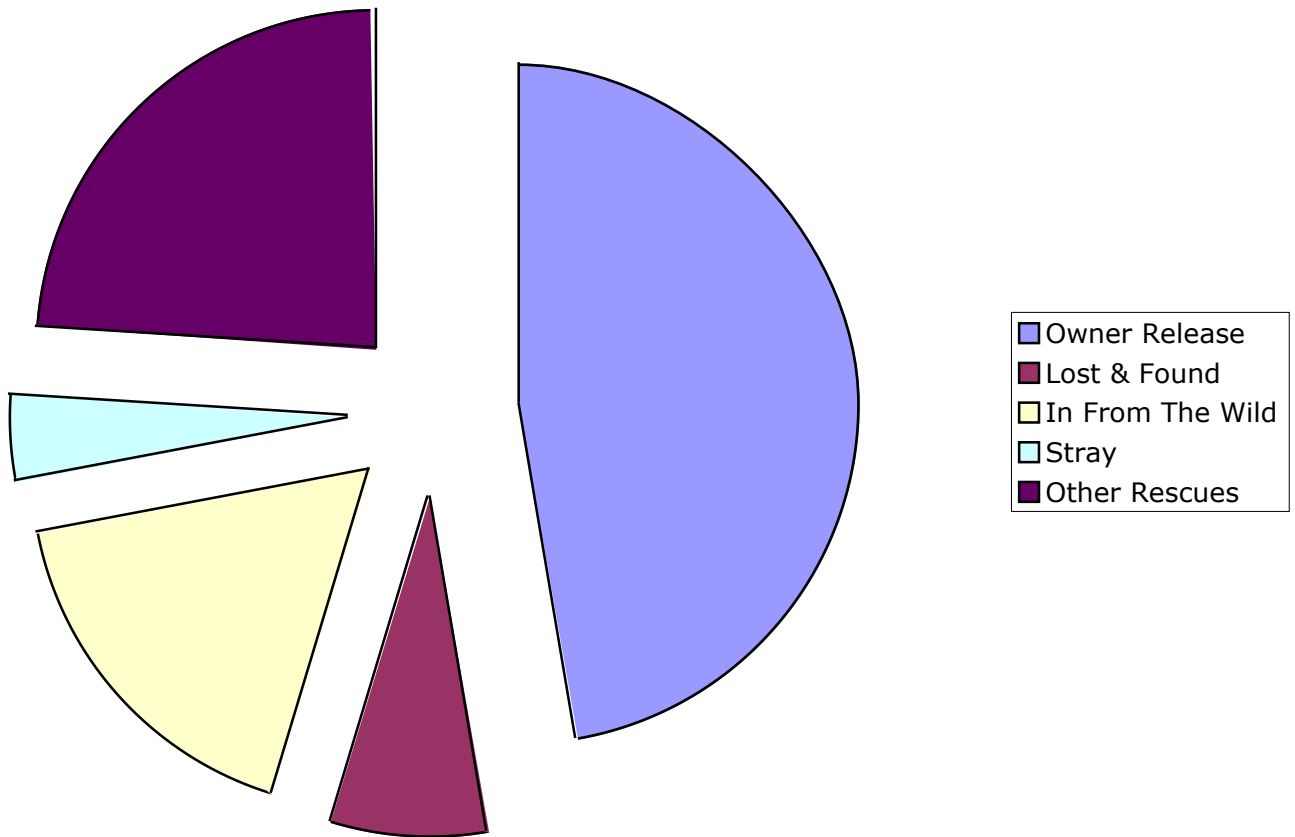


*Lizzie*

*Lizzie was released to PAWS from a local veterinary clinic. Suffering from severe food allergies, her homeless family could no longer care for her. When Lizzie first came to PAWS she was practically bald, and had very itchy skin. After months of controlled diet and food trials, Lizzie has grown back her hair and blossomed into a cute and quirky girl who is ready to find a forever home that can meet her needs.*



## Sources of Program Cats 2008



PAWS continues to take in cats and kittens from multiple sources. Using the Asilomar scale, we rate each cat for health and temperament on intake. During the year we had 352 cats; the majority of intakes fell into the “Healthy/Adoptable” category. The full breakdown is as follows:

*Unhealthy/untreatable - 4 - animals with non-treatable vet conditions, animals who are aggressive (3 were euthanized, 1 barn cat)*

*Treatable/manage - 20 - non-curable but maintainable veterinary conditions, elderly animals (6 barn cats, 1 Sanctuary cat, 9 PALS cats, 4 adopted)*

*Treatable/rehab - 53 - animals under the age of 10 who are either shy or have curable medical conditions (53 adopted)*

*Healthy/adoptable - 275 - social animals with no non-routine veterinary needs (275 adopted)*

# Kitten Intakes

We continued to see a decrease in the number of litters of kittens relinquished to the PAWS Adoption program from our defined service area. The geographic distribution of litters continues to be heavily weighted to the southern part of Kitsap County, with many litters coming from Seabeck, Belfair, Bremerton and Port Orchard.

We were able to increase the number of litters accepted from other agencies due to excellent response to foster home recruitment and retention.

## Litter Intake Sources

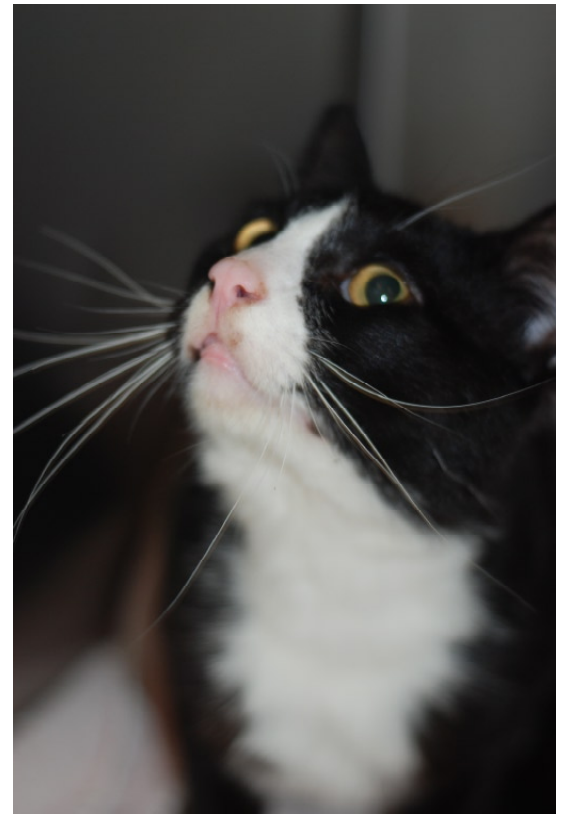
Year	Owner Relinquish	IFTW (In From the Wild)	Other (Rescue Overflows)	Total
2000	77	7	1	85
2001	62	7	1	63
2002	47	25	0	72
2003	63	5	3	71
2004	20	10	23	53
2005	23	11	15	49
2006	19	11	29	59
2007	21	15	5	41
2008	21 (12 out of area)	40	15	76

**During 2008 we assisted Rescue Every Dog (RED) and the Feral Cat Project with overflow or dumped litters of kittens. In addition we assisted with 2 multi-agency hoarder intakes that included 3 litters of kittens. We continue to have good relationships and regular communication with many of the local rescue programs and provide assistance whenever our capacity allows.**

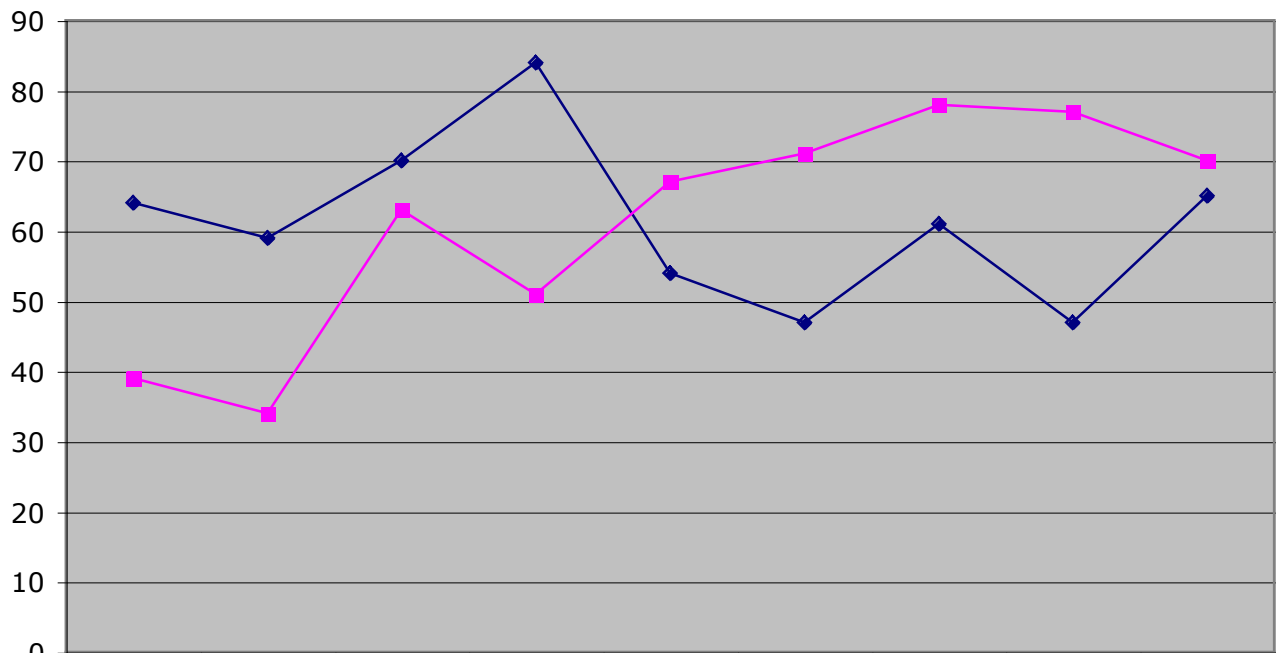


## Adult Sterilization Rates

Continuing to track the comparative rates of sterilization for adult cats entering the Adoption Program, this year saw an uptick in the rate of intact animals coming into the program. This is attributable to the assistance we provided in the hoarder situation. Taking in a large number of young adult cats who were all intact definitely skewed our numbers for this year. If those cats are not figured in the calculation, the trend we have been observing, where previously sterilized animals make up a larger percentage of adult intakes every year, would have continued. 70 adult cats entered the program already sterilized (series 2) and 65 Adults were sterilized on intake to the adoption program - 35 owner released, 18 lost and found, 12 transfers from other organizations (series 1).

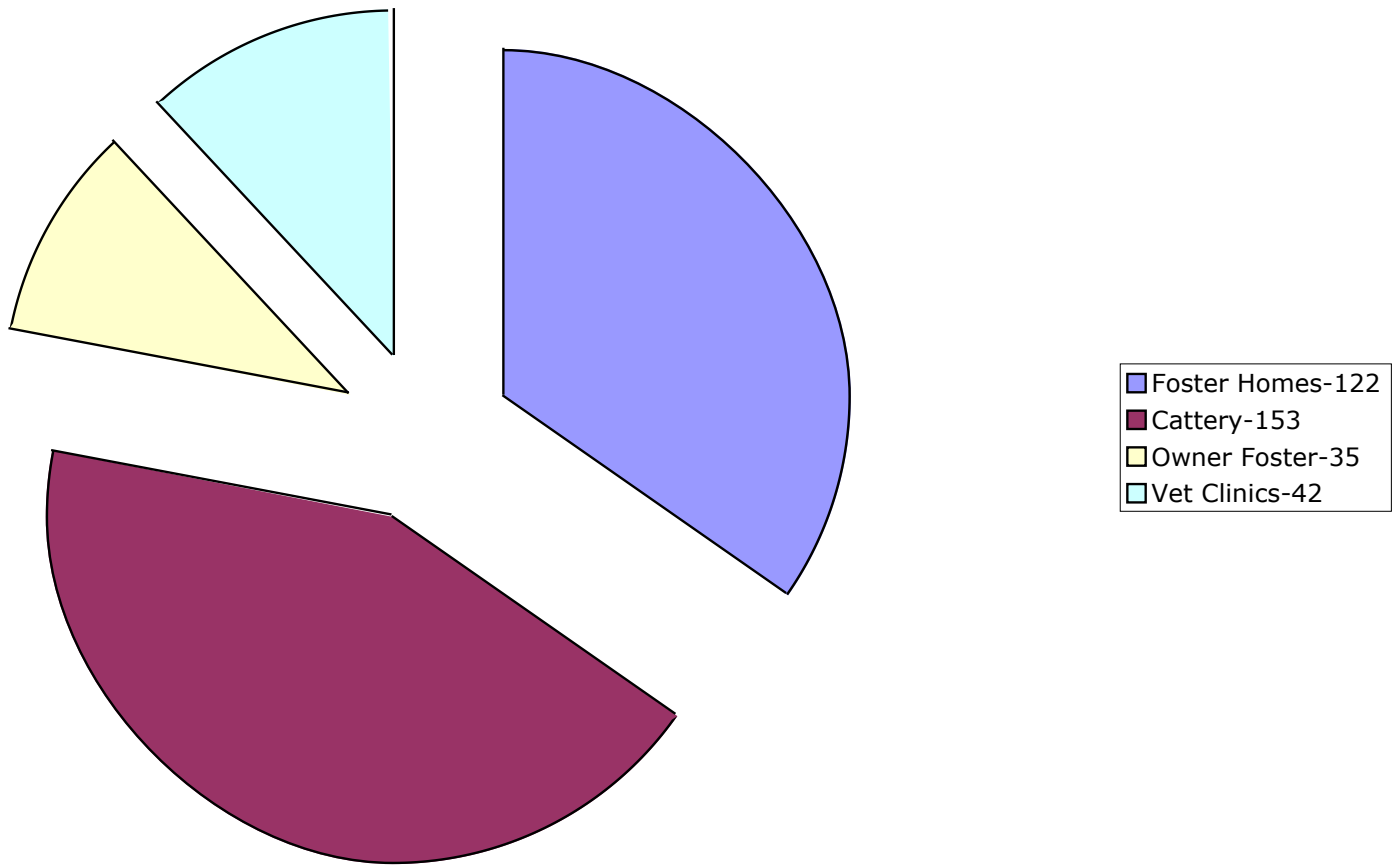


### Adult Intake Spay/Neuter Rates



Series1	64	59	70	84	54	47	61	47	65
Series2	39	34	63	51	67	71	78	77	70

## Foster Distribution



One of the hallmarks of the PAWS Adoption Program is our network of dedicated foster homes, some of whom have been fostering for over 10 years. Other families join the program to foster a single litter, allowing them to bond with and adopt their “pick” kitten.

We saw a small uptick in the number of fosters through our dedicated vet clinics. This is due to our partnership with Linda Dennis - in taking the kittens from her TNR program, we often received multiple litters at a time. Many of these kittens were old enough to spay/neuter on intake and so went directly from the vet clinic to the Adoption Center, not needing to access a foster home. For those litters of kittens coming from owned families, we continued our policy of encouraging the family to keep the kittens until they are 8 weeks old and moving them directly to adoption. This not only lessens the load on our dedicated foster homes, but allows the kittens to mature fully before weaning, which allows for healthier, more behaviorally stable kittens.

## 2008 Program Improvements

During 2008 we made improvements to the Adoption Center to facilitate cleaning and to create a more welcoming environment for both the cats and potential Adopters. A combination of donations and a grant from PetCo™ allowed us to add a secondary enclosure of 6'x4' that is 6' high with a full height door. This allows full litters of kittens, or adult cats who cannot be part of the big enclosure to have a bigger, more open space where people can enter and interact with them. The entire center was painted and one wall was laminated for easier cleaning.

A wall mount television was donated and added to the primary enclosure to play the looping "Video Catnip" as environmental enrichment for the cats. This serves not only to entertain the cats in the enclosure, but provides a jumping off point for conversations with adopters about the need for environmental enrichment with indoor cats.

The six-bay cage was moved from the Adoption Center to The Cattery in the isolation room. This allows better observation and introduction of shy cats.

We continue to receive numerous in-kind donations at The Adoption Center and have worked out a successful system of reselling carriers, covered litterboxes and other "pet gear" for a suggested donation in front of the center.

*Cat Adoption Program Summary 2008*

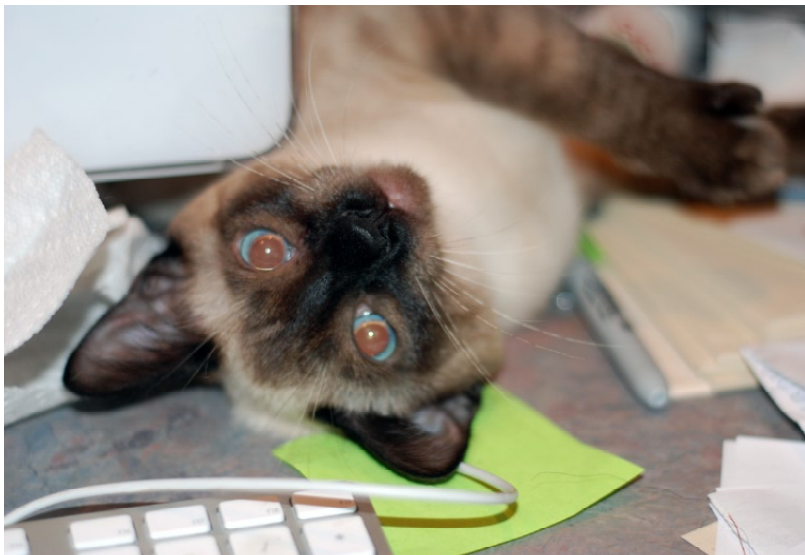


*Beijing*

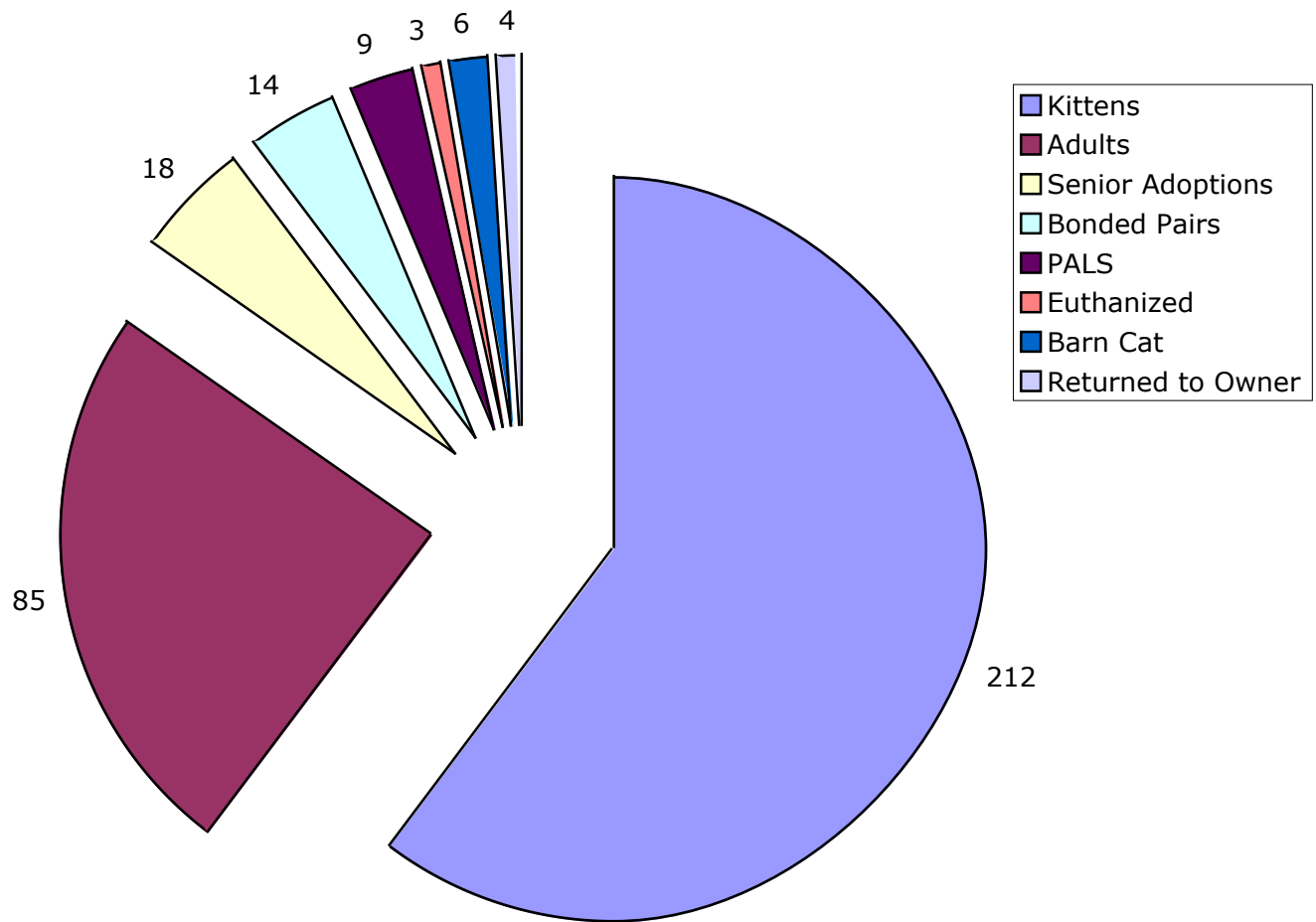
*Beijing was an orphan kitten from a feral colony. Found ill and starving at four weeks old, her chances of survival were slim. She had a severe upper respiratory infection, was lethargic and unable to eat on her own. She received expert care including tube feeding, subcutaneous fluids, antibiotics and eye washes.*

*In a feral cat colony, cats are not vaccinated against many common illnesses, and given their stress-filled life and poor nutrition, feral mothers are hard pressed to provide adequate nutrition for their offspring. Many times feral kittens are sick, malnourished or riddled with parasites by the time they reach PAWS. Proper nutrition, intensive socialization and veterinary care leads to healthy happy kittens ready for forever homes.*

*Slowly, Beijing's indomitable spirit overcame her rough beginnings and her personality began to sparkle. Beijing now lives with her forever family and is a happy, healthy young adult cat.*



## Disposition of Adoption Program Cats

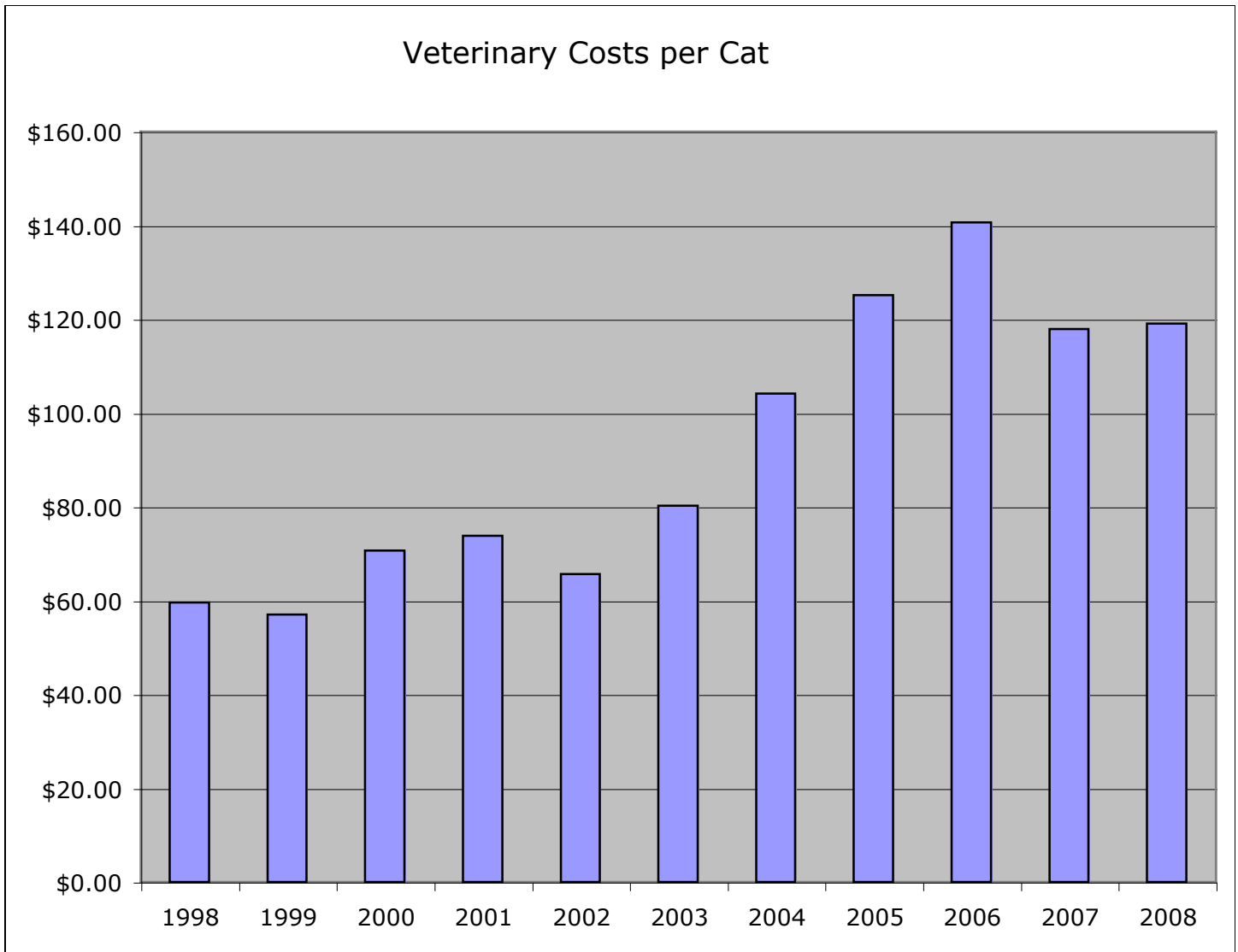


Once again kittens made up the bulk of adoptions for 2008. The variety of other dispositions reflect the variety of programs PAWS has instituted to find homes for as many homeless cats as possible. Creative marketing of hard to adopt cats is one of the strategies employed to maintain our Adoption Guarantee or Low-Kill status. In addition to standard adoptions, we offer discounted senior adoptions, no-cost PALS “permanent foster placements,” special rates for adopting bonded pairs, and barn cat placements for unsocial cats, or social cats who have marking or litterbox issues and who would be unsuccessful in a home setting. PAWS also provides a limited number of sanctuary cat spots at The Cattery, and a limited number of “Hospice” placements for cats who have good quality of life, but whose medical requirements fall outside the time availability of the staff at The Cattery.

PAWS continues to utilize the services of PetFinder.com- gaining additional exposure for cats needing homes. As a result 16 adoptions from 2008 were from far outside our normal service area. Adopters from all over western Washington, including Seattle, Vashon Island, Edmonds, Sultan and Puyallup came to PAWS in search of a particular cat to complete their family.

2008 marked the third year of our Indoor Only Initiative for kitten placements. While still not fully accepted in the community, more and more adopters came in planning to keep their new kitten indoors. Hopefully this is evidence of a continuing cultural shift to the point where indoor-only cats are the accepted way of keeping cats and the indoor/outdoor concept becomes the exception rather than the rule.

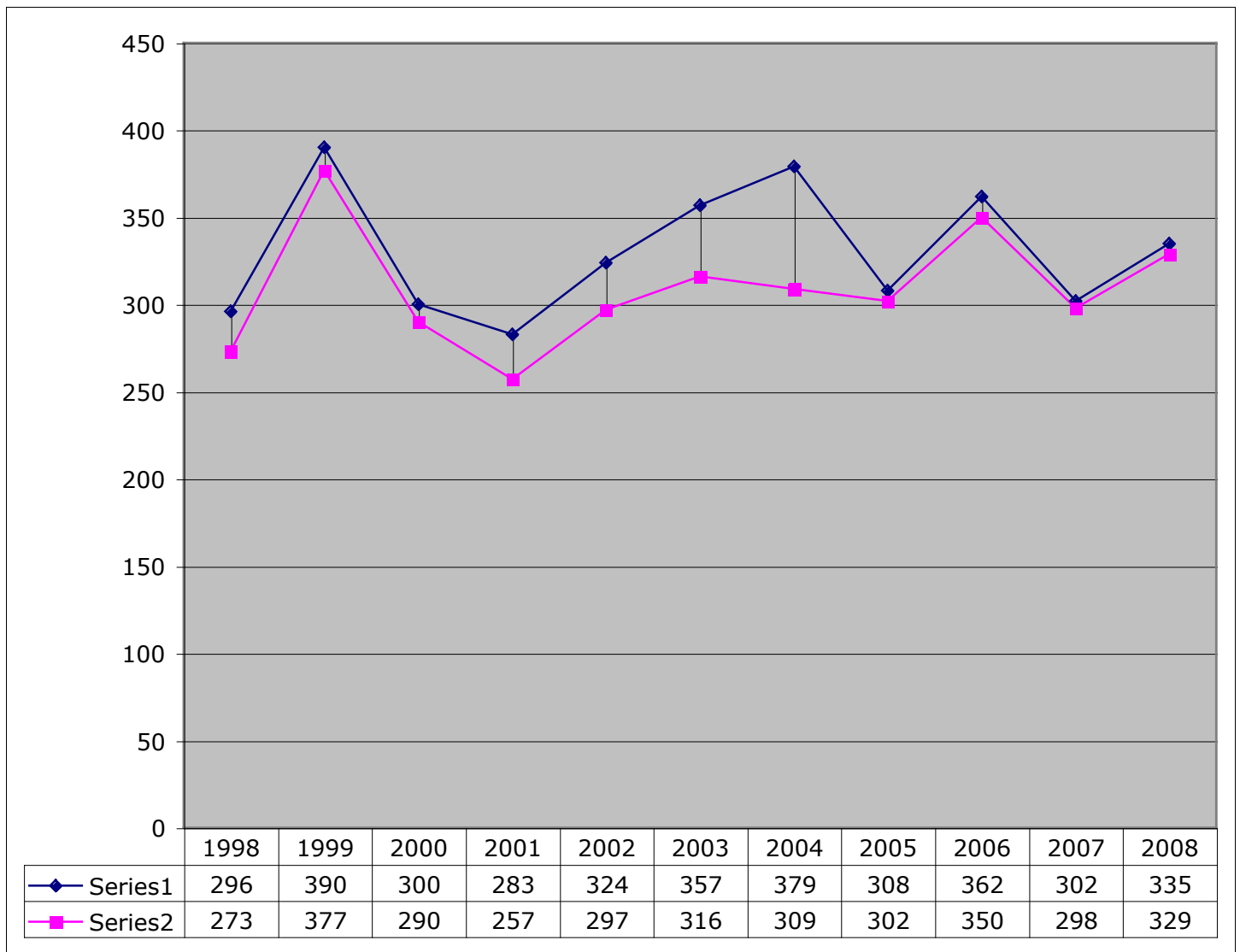




For the second consecutive year, the costs per cat of veterinary care for Adoption Program cats remained stable. With rising costs a factor beyond our control, staff and volunteers are always vigilant to maintain the highest quality of care for Adoption Program cats while keeping an eye on the bottom line.



This year we investigated some alternative protocols for treatments of kittens with upper respiratory infections and diarrhea, the two biggest health limitations to adoption for kittens. These protocols will be reviewed by the veterinarians who work with the program to institute for the 2009 kitten season.



Following the rate of intake versus adoption, we continue to see a trend of closely tracked intakes (series 1) and adoptions (series 2). Ongoing commitment to the highest hygiene standards, limiting mixing of litters in foster homes, and expert care by experienced foster homes have resulted in a number of kittens being adopted into loving homes that would have otherwise not survived.

From a marketing standpoint the continued dedication to PetFinder Listings, volunteer posting of adoptable cats in local coffee shops, “Pet of the Week”, and full page “Adopt-A-Cat” ads have increased visibility of the adoption program and brought in additional adopters.

The program continues to operate at a point where our intakes very closely match adoptions, short of the limited number of spaces set aside for Sanctuary, PALS and Hospice cats.

## Adoption Program Personnel

The Adoption Program continues to be served by supportive and dedicated staff and volunteers. Paid staff include 2 animal care technicians who work both at The Cattery and the Adoption Center providing valuable cross over communication about cats - personality and history. They also transport cats to and from the Adoption Center and Veterinary Clinics, and provide care services (nail clipping, etc.) for several PALS cats. A third paid staffer provides cleaning and coverage for The Cattery and Adoption Center on Sundays. Cattery staff is rounded out by a volunteer who provides regular Reiki/Animal Communication sessions at The Cattery to work with shy or less social cats and bring them to a more adoptable state.

In addition to paid staffers, the Adoption Center is operated by 17 dedicated volunteers who donated over 1600 hours of service cleaning, socializing cats, providing community education, screening adopters and matching cats and kittens with their forever homes. Adoption Counselors receive 6 hours of initial training followed up by regular communication with the Program Director.

The other component of our Adoption Program is our foster home network. During 2008 twenty-four foster homes provided care and socialization for 122 cats and kittens. Foster homes receive ongoing training and support on hygiene, health care, behavior and socialization from the Program Director and the Foster Home Coordinator. Some foster homes specialize in rehabilitating feral kittens as part of the "In From The Wild" program, some work with senior or special need adults, and some serve as respite for kittens awaiting adoption at the Adoption Center. Foster homes provide countless hours of care, sometimes around the clock and they are vital to the program.



*Cassandra*

*Cassandra is a blue Somali who entered the PAWS Adoption Program in November as a found cat. Weighing a mere four pounds, she would not have lived much longer with the approach of winter weather. Severe facial injuries from human or predator-induced trauma resulted in Cassandra requiring extensive veterinary care to survive. After months of rehabilitation which included surgery to remove her eye, followed by a second surgery to remove broken off teeth from her jaw, Cassandra has finally emerged from her state of constant pain. Today Cassandra is still diminutive, but has gained over two pounds. She has also regained a charming pixie-like demeanor and she is outgoing and affectionate when she meets people in search of her forever home.*



## Summary and Recommendations

During 2008 the PAWS Adoption Program found homes for 352 cats and kittens. Using innovative programs such as PALS, Sanctuary/Hospice, Barn Cats and In From The Wild, many cats that would have been euthanized at a traditional shelter received a second chance with PAWS. PAWS is seen in the community as the “gold standard” for adoptions, and we will continue to seek out adopters by offering services such as trial adoptions and, starting in 2009, microchipping all adoption program cats.



The PAWS Adoption Program owes its success to a coalition of dedicated volunteers and professionals, from the foster homes staying up through the night to bottle feed orphan newborns, to the talented veterinarians providing their services to treat and rehabilitate the sick and injured cats that are relinquished to PAWS. Local small business owners, especially Paws & Fins Pet Store and Unleashed Groomers, provide free and “at-cost” goods and services to the program, allowing PAWS to feed high quality cat food and adopt out clean, mat-free adult cats. With the ongoing need to keep a close eye on the financial status of the program, building these types of community relationships will be increasingly important.

The PAWS Adoption Program has worked hard to develop strong relationships with many of the other local animal welfare organizations, from the traditional shelter at Kitsap Humane Society, to adoption guarantee groups like Rescue Every Dog, to non-traditional models like the Feral Cat Project. One goal for 2009 is to see this relationship develop further with the establishment of the West Sound Alliance for Animals, which will encourage inter-organization cooperation, statistical transparency and information sharing across all local animal welfare groups.

The PAWS Adoption Program could not function at this high level without the continued support of benefactors and community donations. During the upcoming year, many plans are in place to engage more individuals in the PAWS mission, to provide continued giving opportunities to long-term supporters and to provide new ways to give to the Adoption Program (such as targeted wish list drives, and PAWS-themed party giving that will bring in new donors as well).