



## **Sacramento County Department of Animal Care and Regulation**

### **Why give away free adult cats?**

Adult cats are more difficult to adopt than kittens and our area animal shelters are at capacity with beautiful, loving adult cats that desperately need homes. The euthanasia rate of adult cats in the Sacramento area is currently about 90%.

### **Is this type of adoption event going to encourage a certain type of person to adopt?**

The idea of “free cats” is a difficult concept for many animal advocates to accept. The Animal Shelter staff considered the following points before participating in this program:

- If the potential adopter can't afford to pay the adoption fee, then how can they afford to feed the cat or pay for veterinary care?
- The least desirable adopters are the ones who are going to want a free cat.
- This will be a free-for-all for people wanting cats for reasons that the shelter does not condone or agree with.

We realized that the reality is that anyone who is motivated can find a free cat in a matter of minutes. If a person cannot afford to pay the regular adoption fee, they are not likely able to afford to get the cat spayed or neutered, vaccinated, microchipped and licensed. If they get that free cat from our shelter during this promotion, the cat will go home with all of these important services performed and have a chance at a loving life

We also recognize that people wanting a free cat for the wrong reasons are not likely to take the time to drive the shelter, complete an adoption application with their personal information and then wait for the cat to be spayed/neutered before they can take it home. There is always a risk with *every* adoption, even when full fees are paid, so when weighing the large euthanasia rate of adult cats due to lack of adoptions, against stretching traditional ways of thinking with a promotion like this and getting more cats into homes, the benefits will likely far exceed any negative repercussions.

### **Is the animal shelter going to screen potential adopters?**

As with every shelter animal adoption, thorough adoption counseling is key to making the right matches. Just because we are offering free cats does not mean there is any less emphasis on counseling.

We will also be checking in with adopters who participated in this program for the next few months to make sure the cats are settling well into their new home and to help to resolve any issues they may have with their cats.

**Has this type of promotion been done before?**

The American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has done a number of studies on “free cats” throughout shelters across the nation, and have determined that overall, this promotion has significantly increased adult adoptions with few negative side-effects. For more information about the ASPCA, please visit them online at <http://www.aspca.org/>.

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