

## For Immediate Release

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## Woods Humane Society Kicks Off Spay/Neuter Awareness Month by Reopening Clinics to Full Capacity, Announcing Fundraising Goal to Alter 1,000 Community Cats in 2021



San Luis Obispo, CA (2/1/2021) — Just in time to kick off **February's National Spay/Neuter Awareness Month**, [Woods Humane Society](#) announces that its two spay/neuter clinic locations are again open at full capacity to appointments for publicly owned pets. The organization also launches a 2021 goal to raise enough [Project M.E.O.W.](#) funds to spay/neuter 1000 unowned community cats in 2021, beginning with an estimated 30 cats in one day, scheduled for February 2nd.

### Preventive Care During a Pandemic

The clinics return to full capacity for public appointments after the most recent state-mandated restrictions to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic were lifted on January 25, 2021.

“We are grateful to be able to safely reopen our [online scheduling module](#) for our community to schedule affordable sterilization surgeries for their owned pet cats or dogs, especially before we get into the warmer months,” says Dr. Leslie Sklena, DVM, Director of Veterinary Medicine, noting that unaltered roaming pets begin to reproduce in the spring, and “kitten season” typically begins in March.

“The timing is also crucial as many families may be economically impacted by the pandemic and in need of more affordable veterinary health and preventive care options. Woods is honored to be able to continue to serve the community in this way and fulfill its mission to manage the local pet population, while protecting the safety of our staff and the public.”

Woods Humane Society's clinics have pivoted to an outdoor, curbside, masked pick-up and drop-off protocol, among other precautions, to protect all parties and to remain compliant with all mandated safety and social-distancing protocols.

### Community Cat Program

In addition to reopening for pet owners, Woods Humane Society also announces its ambitious goal to raise enough funds to alter 1,000 free-roaming, unowned community cats this year through [Project M.E.O.W.](#)

Project M.E.O.W. aims to help manage community cat populations by offering a subsidized spay/neuter surgery, in addition to a rabies vaccine and an identifying ear tip, for just \$25. This reduced cost allows local rescues and concerned citizens to Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) more community cats, both friendly and feral.



Since its inception in 2019, Project M.E.O.W. has already helped fund 1,913 ultra-low-cost community cat spay/neuter surgeries, stabilizing cat colonies and preventing an estimated 10,908 kittens from being born to a life without a home or basic medical care. With kitten season coming, and with the estimated mortality rate of unowned kittens thought to be as high as 75 percent, Woods Humane Society says this cause is both humane and urgent.

### **The Many Benefits of Spaying and Neutering**

Dr. Sklena explains that dogs and cats that do not get altered can have multiple litters per year, rapidly contributing to the number of homeless animals in our county. For this reason, Woods spays or neuters all animals in its adoption program prior to making them available for adoption.

Even amid the challenges of 2020, Woods Humane Society was able to perform 4,870 spay/neuter surgeries last year, for animals in its own adoption program, as well as for SLO County Animal Services Division and for public pet owners and local animal rescues.

Altered animals, she notes, recover quickly from the surgery and receive many health and behavioral benefits over the course of their lives, including reduced roaming and territorial behaviors, lowered risk for certain cancers and diseases, and increased life expectancy.

Woods Humane Society has created a [“Myth-Busters” Quiz](#) to help dispel some of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding the sterilization surgeries as part of their Spay/Neuter Awareness campaign this month.

**For information about scheduling a spay or neuter surgery for owned pets, please visit [SpaySLOCounty.org](https://www.spayslocounty.org). To schedule a subsidized surgery for a community cat, call (805) 464-5034.**

**Donate to Project M.E.O.W. at [WoodsHumane.org/ProjectMEOW](https://www.woodshumane.org/ProjectMEOW).**

**For media inquiries or high-resolution images, please contact [EmilyL@woodshumane.org](mailto:EmilyL@woodshumane.org).**

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### **About Woods Humane Society**

Founded in 1955, Woods Humane Society is a privately funded, non-profit, animal sheltering and welfare organization that annually places more than 3,000 dogs and cats into loving homes. All animals are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped prior to being placed for adoption. Visit [www.woodshumane.org](https://www.woodshumane.org) to view available animals, donate or learn more. To make an adoption appointment, call Woods Humane Society SLO, located at 875 Oklahoma Avenue in San Luis Obispo, at (805) 543-9316, or Woods Humane Society North County, located at 2300 Ramona Road in Atascadero, at (805) 466-5403.