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Cat population at 'crisis level'



Regional News

June 07, 2008 11:33 PM

Jim Mason

Bob Barker would be ticked, people.

The former fixture of daytime TV signed off from the The Price Is Right for more than 20 years with: "Help control the pet population. Have your pets spayed or neutered."

The price was not right, apparently, because Ontario, including York Region, did not get the message.

Animal shelters across the province are packed with pets, especially cats, this spring.

"It's at a crisis level," said Kristin Williams, spokesperson for the OSPCA, whose provincial office is steps from the society's York Region shelter on Woodbine Avenue near Vivian Road in rural Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"People know about spaying and neutering, but it's not translating."

About 300 felines are up for adoption at the local shelter, and it's a similar story at facilities across Ontario.

The message from the OSPCA is two-pronged:

- There are several cats (and many small dogs, too) ready for adoption.
- If you have a pet, remember Mr. Barker's words and get it fixed.

"Pet overpopulation contributes to the cycle of neglect and abuse," Ms Williams said. "Even finding loving homes for puppies and kittens is challenging, because there are more adoptable pets than willing, adoptive homes."

With this being breeding season, the OSPCA is bracing for more additions.

One female cat, allowed to breed for seven years, could result in 420,000 cats, while 67,000 dogs could result from one female dog and her offspring.

"If people want to make a real difference, they should consider adoption," she said.

Animals adopted from the OSPCA come already spayed/neutered and vaccinated.

Spaying and neutering can reduce shelter intake and euthanasia. It can also reduce health risks, physical stress and improve behaviour, the society says. Sterilized pets are less likely to roam, reducing the risk of injury, accident and loss.

Check out yorkregionospca.com to view pets up for adoption at the local shelter.

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