

ASPCA Cat Assistance Program Launches

The effort will provide free cat food and litter to cat parents in need.

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More than 3 million cats and kittens end up in shelters each year, but this year's economic conditions mean even more cats are at risk, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The ASPCA, ASPCA Shelter, cat litter manufacturer Fresh Steps and cat food manufacturer 9Lives have teamed up to provide cat food and litter to pet owners most in need. The program is called the ASPCA Cat Assistance Program. It will run like a cat food and litter bank for thousands of cat owners across the United States.

To launch the program, an event will be held Thursday, Nov. 5, at the New York City ASPCA Shelter at 424 E. 92nd St. The event, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., will feature Dr. Stephen Zawistowski, who will offer free one-on-one cat care consultations in an "Ask the Vet" session.

At the event, cat owners in need will receive a free Cat Assistance Kit, compliments of the ASPCA and the makers of Fresh Step litter and 9Lives cat food, while supplies last.

The free kits will include a litter pan, litter scoop and cat toys along with free-product coupons for Fresh Step litter and 9Lives cat food. The Fresh Step coupons will provide up to 140,000 pounds of free Fresh Step litter and the 9Lives coupons will provide up to 31,500 pounds of free 9Lives cat food. One free kit will be given per household, while supplies last.

Pet lovers across the country can participate in this charity this month by purchasing specially marked packages of Fresh Step litter with the Paw Points code on the side panel and then entering the code online. For each purchase entered by unique Paw Points code, Fresh Step will donate 50 cents to the ASPCA, up to \$400,000.

Here are other cities where the ASPCA Cat Assistance Program will take place:

Humane Society of Tampa Bay, Tampa, Fla.: Nov. 6 Spokanimal C.A.R.E., Spokane, Wash.: Nov. 6-8 Town Lake Animal Center, Austin, Texas: Nov. 7 Charleston Animal Society, Charleston, S.C.: Nov. 7 Nashville Humane Association, Nashville, Tenn.: Nov. 14 East Bay SPCA, Oakland, Calif.: Nov. 14 Sacramento SPCA, Sacramento, Calif.: Nov. 14 Paws Chicago, Chicago: Nov. 14 Pikes Peak Pet Pantry, Colorado Springs, Colo.: Nov. 15