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# FRIENDS OF FELINES

**Friends of Felines founder Ray Huff was chosen for his dedication to helping stray and feral cats.**

**BY DIANE MCCARTNEY**

**The Wichita Eagle**

A man who "lives and breathes saving feral cats" has been named Pet Person of the Year for 2008 by the Wichita Veterinary Medical Association.

Ray Huff, founder and president of Friends of Felines, a nonprofit organization based in Sedgwick, was chosen for his dedication to helping stray and feral cats in south-central Kansas.

Huff, 60, who is also police chief in Sedgwick, "has approached the feral cat problem with a passion that you rarely see in volunteers," wrote H. Wayne Roberts of Wichita, one of two people to nominate Huff for the award.

"He doesn't seek (or even like) the limelight, but only what it can do for his cats. I believe he must give 99 percent of his free time to some activity supporting Friends of Felines.

"He lives and breathes saving feral cats. I have never seen anyone in any organization with such passion."

That passion made Huff an obvious pick for the Pet Person of the Year award, said Sarah Hicks, a veterinarian at Indian Hills Animal Clinic who headed up the selection committee.

The award recognizes people whose service and acts of kindness have improved and enriched the human-animal bond.

"What he is doing is not only giving these cats a safer and longer life, but helping to prevent the spread of many diseases -- as intact cats tend to fight more and therefore spread feline leukemia, FIV and other contagious viruses," Hicks said.

Friends of Felines uses a method called trap, neuter, return (TNR) to control feral cat populations, and a network of volunteer caretakers to monitor the cats after they have been returned to a safe environment.

Huff and other volunteers provide food, shelter and medical attention to more than 100 cats.

Huff said he was "extremely happy" to receive the award.

"Due to Friends of Felines and the work that we have done, we've got some people in other areas, especially in Kansas, who are starting up their own TNR programs, which is just great," he said.

Since Huff started Friends of Felines in 2003, the feral cat problem in Sedgwick has been "virtually eliminated," Roberts wrote in his nomination.

Huff "has volunteered thousands of hours of his personal time and has personally helped fund Friends of Felines to keep this organization alive....

"In addition to personally feeding three colonies twice a day in Sedgwick, he has found time to speak to groups and municipalities across the state to educate the public about feral cats."

Roberts wrote that Friends of Felines' "most ambitious project" was rescuing more than 100 cats a year ago on a farm near Syracuse, Kan.

"On the first trapping Ray and an associate pulled off in Greensburg, Kan., just minutes before the tornado hit," Roberts wrote. "They lost their van, the trailer, over 30 traps and 27 cats. It took several more trappings, but all the cats were eventually trapped and relocated to safe colonies" in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico.

Huff said some of the credit for the award should go to Alley Cat Allies, a national advocate for stray and feral cats, and its president, Becky Robinson. Robinson has provided invaluable information and support to Friends of

Felines, Huff said, including conducting seminars on feral cats in McPherson and Wichita last fall.

Huff will receive a copy of the Kansas Humane Society's Pets & Their People calendar, with his photo in it, and recognition at the Kansas State Fair in September.

How to help...

Friends of Felines is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of stray and feral cats in south-central Kansas.

To help or for more information, call 316-772-0329; e-mail [info@felinefriendsks.com](mailto:info@felinefriendsks.com); or go online to [www.felinefriendsks.com](http://www.felinefriendsks.com).

Donations can also be sent to: Friends of Felines, 717 N. Commercial, Sedgwick, KS 67135.

#### PET PERSON OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

These people were nominated for 2008 Pet Person of the Year:

- Ray Huff, nominated by Sue Schamp and H. Wayne Roberts
- Samantha Pohlman, nominated by Lavonda Cash
- Shirley Kosjer, nominated by Marcus Kosjer
- "Mae West," nominated by Kelly Smith
- Nicola Gentry, nominated by TraceAnn Adkins
- Janell Knuth, nominated by Kris Knuth
- Winona Duncan, nominated by Andrew Koehn
- Calea Carr, nominated by Gayle Morphis
- Rebecca Jones, nominated by Kathy Jones