



Contacts:

Quinn White
Development Director

Cat Town

quinn@cattownoakland.org

Rebecca Katz
Director

Oakland Animal Services

rkatz@oaklandnet.com

Elizabeth Knight
Executive Director

Upward Roots

elizabeth@upwardroots.org

FOR RELEASE DECEMBER 12, 2018

5th GRADERS LEND A PAW TO OAKLAND'S ANIMALS

Student-led fundraiser to give vulnerable shelter cats a second chance at adoption

The press is invited to join students as they volunteer to help cats get adopted at Cat Town on December 12, 2018, from 2:30-4:30pm, at 2869 Broadway, Oakland, CA.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA - The holidays are about gathering together— and in Oakland, about making a difference. So, when Maria Pirner's students noticed homeless cats and dogs in their neighborhood, they asked her how they could help.

Ms. Pirner is a teacher at Korematsu Discovery Academy and a site leader for Upward Roots, a nonprofit that empowers students to design their own community service projects. She reached out to Oakland Animal Services, the city shelter, and to Cat Town, a local nonprofit that finds homes for cats who struggle at the shelter, to see how her students could support animals in need.

Ms. Pirner told us, "I knew my students would be excited to learn how to be good partners with their own eyes, and thought the collaboration between Oakland Animal Services and Cat Town set a great example of doing more together."

The fifth graders launched an awareness campaign for the two organizations, creating posters to fundraise for their shared cause. They even visited Cat Town to volunteer with the cats.

As the city's only open intake shelter, Oakland Animal Services handles the hardest animal welfare cases on a daily basis, and helps thousands of animals find homes every year. "Not every cat can handle waiting in in a cage to be adopted, surrounded by hundreds of cats and dogs," says OAS Director Rebecca Katz. "We rely on Cat Town to help the cats who get really stressed into an environment where they can relax a bit better."

The two organizations work closely together to support the cats who need extra help, and to encourage Oaklanders to support their local shelter. "The shelter is everyone's responsibility," said Ann Dunn, Cat Town's Executive Director and Founder. "They do as much as they can with what the community gives them, so if no one visits, those animals don't get adopted. They're the front line for Oakland's animals."

Cat Town established the country's first cat cafe in 2014 to make it easier to visit cats who struggle at the shelter, but have been stepping in to provide stressed cats with support through their foster program since 2011. In that time, they've helped reduce the euthanasia rate for Oakland's cats by 70%.

"These kids are so excited to help," says Pirner. Sometimes all it takes is one simple act of kindness to turn a life around, and with this project, they're hoping to change lots of lives."

###

About Upward Roots

Upward Roots was founded to empower youth to be leaders and changemakers through youth-led, youth-driven community service. They believe that each and every young person can be a positive changemaker in their community. They provide the space, place, and structure for young people to activate their changemaking abilities. Through collaboratively designing and leading community service solutions to problems they are most passionate about, participants understand and share the feelings of others, know that their actions matter, and believe that they are effective leaders. Learn more at <http://www.upwardroots.org>.

About Cat Town

Cat Town's mission is to transform the approach to saving shelter cats, reducing euthanasia nationwide, and to find great homes for cats who are considered unadoptable in the traditional animal welfare model. In 2014, Cat Town opened the

nation's first cat cafe to help elderly, under-socialized, sick, and injured cats get adopted. Through this adoption center and their foster program, their work has proven that cats frequently considered to be "unadoptable" make exceptional companions. Cat Town has helped reduce Oakland's euthanasia rate for shelter cats by 70% since 2011. Learn more at www.cattownoakland.org.

About Oakland Animal Services

Oakland Animal Services is responsible for Oakland's stray, injured, abandoned, neglected and mistreated animals, both domestic and wild. As Oakland's only "open admissions" shelter, they accept all of the city's homeless, injured, orphaned, unwanted, lost, abandoned and mistreated animals — including companion animals, farm animals, exotic animals, and native wildlife — regardless of age, breed, temperament or medical condition. Learn more at <http://www.oaklandanimalservices.org>.