



# Companion Cats



*Providing Senior Citizens the opportunity to become caregivers for a homeless adult cat.*

A program offered by Harbor Humane Society.

**Many wonderful adult cats are brought to the Humane Society on a daily basis for a variety of reasons. However, many people prefer to adopt kittens or younger cats, so the adult cats are often overlooked.**

*Companion Cats is a program designed to match a lovable adult cat with a senior citizen caregiver.*

## *How does this program work?*

- Harbor Humane Society's trained staff will work to match a caregiver with an adult cat.
- The cat is spayed/neutered and given vaccinations valid for one year.
- Harbor Humane Society will provide two months worth of cat food, and more if needed through our *Animeals* program.
- Through the generosity of Purina Pets for Seniors, there is no cost to adopt the adult cat.

For more information or to get involved, contact  
Harbor Humane Society  
14345 Bagley Street  
West Olive, MI 49460

616-399-2119  
Www.harborhumane.org



## **The benefits of Pets for Senior Citizens**

You've probably noticed that when you pet a soft, warm cat you relax and your heart feels a little warmer. Studies have shown that owning and handling animals significantly benefits health. In fact, pets may help elderly owners live longer, healthier, and more enjoyable lives.

There are a number of explanations for exactly how pets accomplish all these health benefits.

- Pets need walking, feeding, grooming, fresh water, and fresh kitty litter, and they encourage lots of playing and petting. All of these activities require some action from owners. Any activity can benefit the cardiovascular system and help keep joints limber and flexible. Consistently performing this kind of minor exercise can keep pet owners able to carry out the normal activities of daily living.
- Pets may also aid seniors simply by providing some physical contact. Studies have shown that when people pet animals, their blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature decrease.
- Pets are an excellent source of companionship. They can act as a support system for older people who don't have any family or close friends nearby. People with pets were better able to remain emotionally stable during crises than those without.
- Pets can also work as a buffer against social isolation. Often the elderly have trouble leaving home, so they don't have a chance to see many people. Pets give them a chance to interact. This can help combat depression, one of the most common medical problems facing seniors today.
- The responsibility of caring for an animal may also give the elderly a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning. Pets also help seniors stick to regular routines of getting up in the morning, buying groceries, and going outside, which help motivate them to eat and sleep regularly and well.